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CULTURAL IDENTITY AND PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT OF COMMUNITY INTERPRETERS

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CULTURAL IDENTITY AND PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT OF
COMMUNITY INTERPRETERS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

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But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restored and sorrows end.
Shakespeare

Sadly, this is usually the only section in most dissertations where the writer doesn't feel the need to blindly follow the dictates of academic conventions of writing; the only section where we witness the author's unconstrained creativity and wit. As a result, these texts provide a remarkable variety of approaches to thanking the people important in one's life; and it is next to impossible to be original in presenting this section. Avoiding this futile enterprise, I will thank everyone in the most straightforward and unoriginal manner possible, and save my creative abilities for the remainder of the dissertation. This is an unfortunate circumstance given that this is the section that I have always looked forward the most to writing; and having arrived at last at this long coveted position, I can't wait to give my gratitude to the people who helped me along the way.

I would like to start at the beginning, with my family, my father and my mother, without whose support and doubts I wouldn't have grown; my sister and my aunt Irina deserve a special mention, too.

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Abstract

The current study is based on 30 in-depth interviews with Russian professional interpreters. It addresses three broad questions: cultural identity, invisibility / involvement, and the relationship between the two. In doing so, it attempts to connect the literature in intercultural communication and in translation / interpreting studies and provide a foundation for interdisciplinary dialogue.

It was expected that cultural identity could be based on a single speech community, several communities, or on a transcendence of / denial by speech communities. The majority of respondents talked about an identity centered on their own culture. This is most likely the consequence of the monolingual / monocultural Russian society that although welcoming foreignness, usually reinterprets in its own terms.

Invisibility and involvement are about the perception of the interpreter's role as active or passive and the enactment of that role. Most interviewees saw invisibility as an ideal that is theoretically desirable but practically unattainable. They preferred to adjust the level of their involvement spontaneously based on the severity of the situation, rather than blindly follow a set standard.

It was expected that cultural identity will have an influence on the amount and the kind of the involvement performed by the interpreter. This expectation was not met, for several reasons. First, only one variation of cultural identity was present in the sample (an identity based on one community). Second, all the interviewees worked with English, a language of international communication where the cultural component was diluted and hence had little influence on the interpreters' identity. Third and most important of all,

the interviewees showed a remarkable ability to separate their personal and professional lives (backstage and frontstage in Goffman's terms) and by doing so break the link between identity and action.

Introduction

> …when men cannot communicate thoughts to each other, simply because of difference of language, all of the similarity of their common nature is of no avail to unite them in fellowship. So true is this that a man would be more cheerful with his dog for company than with a foreigner.
>
> Augustine of Hippo[1]

Interpreters as cultural mediators and as multicultural persons

Interpreters and translators are intercultural communicators. For that reason, they can be studied from at least two different perspectives. One option is to demonstrate how their expertise enables intercultural communication, to show the impact that the output of their work has on the other participants of the intercultural encounter. Similar to other professional intercultural communicators, interpreters can serve as bridges between different worldviews. The second possibility is to focus on the person translating rather than on the translation output or the context of the text transfer. From this perspective, translators do not only influence the world by their actions as linguistic and cultural bridges; their identity is also transformed through the exposure to multiple languages and cultures. Their unique knowledge also gives them a unique intercultural experience, an identity that is different from that of the majority of people.

The first approach is common in translation and interpreting studies, where the focus is often on the texts that are produced, rather than on the people producing them.

With the cultural turn in translation and interpreting studies in recent years, the social context in which the process occurs has been also taken into account (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1998); however, the context is usually studied only inasmuch as it helps to understand the production of the text. The second approach is common in intercultural communication literature; but the focus is usually on larger social groups, rather on interpreters in particular.

The two approaches are related because the two experiences are interdependent – an interpreter's identity influences his or her work, and vice versa. Here I am interested in tracing the first part of the relationship – how who interpreters *are* influences what they *do*. In particular, I would like to focus on a part of this relationship – the link between cultural identity (who they are culturally) and personal involvement (what choices they make in their work). Cultural identity is a subset of a person's identity and has to do with what culture or cultures a person identifies with. Personal involvement is part of the interpreter's actions. It has to do with visibility (Angelelli, 2003; Venuti, 1992) – the continuum of choices between active involvement in the interaction by consciously intervening in the information exchange, on the one hand, and between passive translation based on the assumption that a translator is simply a conduit for other people's ideas.

To relate cultural identity to personal involvement, I will bring together the literature in translation and interpreting studies and intercultural communication. The former must be reviewed to understand personal involvement, the latter to understand cultural identity. Since both disciplines have borrowed freely from and interacted with other fields, both reviews will also have to include elements from the literature in

adjacent disciplines – anthropology, sociology, rhetorical criticism and literary criticism. These reviews will help the next tasks – formulating research questions and selecting an appropriate methodology.

The significance of the study does not end with the translation and interpreting community. Translators and interpreters are a part of a larger group, that of professional intercultural communicators, who have a daily involvement with the representatives of other cultures. If our world is indeed to become a global city where direct contact with other cultures is part of the experience of the majority of people, we should prepare for that by studying the lives of the people who are already involved in that today.

Defining culture and intercultural communication

For a study in intercultural communication, culture is a core concept that requires a clear definition. I will use Philipsen's (1992) notions of a speech code and a speech community in defining culture. Such a definition focuses on culture as a group-level phenomenon rather than an individual-level impression of otherness.

A speech code is a "historically enacted, socially constructed system of terms, meanings, premises, and rules pertaining to communicative conduct" (p. 56). Every person that can enact a given speech code is a member of a speech community that pertains to that speech code. In the present study, a "speech code" is seen as an embodiment of a "culture". An intercultural encounter, then, occurs when individuals from different speech communities interact. According to this definition, talk and the ways of speaking are a deciding factor in determining "otherness". The definition also assumes, in line with Sapir-Whorfian ideas (Whorf, 1956), that familiarity with a linguistic code gives the speaker the unique worldview of that speech community.

According to Philipsen (1987), the purposes of communication between the members of a speech community are to create and affirm their shared identity. Learning the speech code makes you a member of a speech community, and membership entails identification with that community through sharing their unique worldview. The link between competence within a given speech community or a given culture, and the identification with that culture through shared worldview, is an important consideration that will be revisited later in the explication of the current study.

According to this definition of culture, there are as many distinct cultures as there are distinct speech communities. Any contact between members of different speech communities, then, should be considered intercultural communication. Such a view is in line with the recent trend in intercultural communication research to include interactions with the elderly, with the physically challenged, as well as interactions between people of different sexual orientations, or of different genders (Hajek & Giles, 2003). These broad definitions are similar to the impression-based approach from Tajfel and Turner's (1986) conception of intergroup encounters: as long as one of the interlocutors sees group membership as salient in the encounter, the encounter is "intercultural".

According to this definition, there may be numerous speech communities (and therefore cultures) within one society or one nation. In the United States, a conversation between a White Oklahoman Baptist preacher and an India-born white collar worker from the Silicon Valley would qualify as intercultural communication. Such a conversation may require cultural translation since the worldviews of the two speech communities from which the speakers come are different; but it will not require linguistic translation, and it will not require an interpreter in the traditional sense.

Interpreters will be required when there is a need for linguistic mediation. They engage, then, in a special kind of intercultural communication, where they serve as mediators between members of different cultures (or speech communities) separated by a lack of common language.

Interpreters vs. translators

Obviously, oral interpreters are not the only people who qualify as both cultural and linguistic bridges; translators of written texts pass this test as well. What is the reason, then, for not including them in this study?

In recent years, translation studies and interpreting studies have become two distinct disciplines in recognition of the differences between translating and interpreting. In the broadest sense, translation is a transfer of meaning from one symbolic code to another (Anderson, 1976). This understanding of translation is in agreement with a widely used classification of translation types offered by Jakobson (1959). He singles out 1) intralingual translation, which is rephrasing a text in a given language by using the resources of that language; 2) interlingual translation, i.e. re-working signs in one language into another language, and 3) intersemiotic translation, or transmutation – moving from a verbal symbolic code to a nonverbal one. Interlingual translation is the focus of most practitioners and scholars of translation, and the term "translation" itself is almost always used to describe what Jakobson understood to be only one of the three possible types, that is interlingual translation. Interlingual translation is the focus of this study, and following the tradition in the field of translation studies I will refer to my subject simply as "translation".

This activity of translation can be further divided into categories of oral and written translation. Oral translation is usually referred to as simply "interpretation"; the term translation is sometimes used interchangeably with "literary translation". Technically, literary translation is a sub-category within written translation; it is concerned specifically with the translation of literary texts, or works of fiction such as novels, stories, and poetry. Apart from literary translation, written translation includes working with non-fiction texts, such as scholarly writing, legal documents, and technical manuals.

Oral translation itself can be roughly divided into two broad and sometimes overlapping categories. One is commonly known as "conference translation", which receives the most attention from scholars but which is not as common as the other type, "community interpretation" (Cronin, 2002). Conference translation is done in very formal contexts, where interactions between parties are highly structured, and the activity of translation itself is taken very seriously and significant resources are devoted to the technical side of the activity, such as the rather costly equipment that facilitates the translator's work.

The other type of oral translation is community interpretation (Alexieva, 1997; Wadensjö, 1998) where translators work as facilitators enabling dialogue between different groups within a community or between the community and the people visiting it. These encounters are usually less structured and considerably less formal, and here the translator's role is not as rigidly defined as with conference translation. Another difference between the two is technical – conference interpreting is often simultaneous, community interpreting is usually consecutive.

Dividing all interpreting activity into two types, conference and community, provides a very crude classification; to be effective, it must be seen as a continuum between the formal and informal, simultaneous and continuous, or professional and ad hoc – and not as two extremes. Medical interpreting, for example, combines the elements of both conference interpreting (in its strictly delineated legal responsibilities) and community interpreting (in its tendency to give interpreters access to very intimate information about their clients, usually only possible in less formal contexts).

Translation is a highly reflective activity, where the structure of the work allows for deliberation, multiple attempts at a single translation, and even manipulation of the text. There is no immediate pressure to produce a target text before the next portion of the source text arrives. So on the one hand translation looks like a better candidate for tracing down issues like personal involvement, which has to do with the manipulation of texts. But on the other hand translation is a monologic activity. The only dialogue that is happening in translation is a silent one between the author and the translator, with the translator being the active voice; the third party, the audience of the translation, is not immediately present in the interaction. Translation is to interpretation what mass communication is to interpersonal communication. It is largely one-way, with greatly delayed feedback and no face-to-face contact between the producer of the text and the audience.

My definition of culture is based on communicative acts – on constructing shared meaning through direct involvement in a speech community, through literally living in it and experiencing it day to day. Translation is possible without such an involvement; interpretation is not. While translators can view a text in isolation, work with it in any

geographical location they prefer, an interpreter is immersed in the situation in which the text is produced, complete with its social and cultural context and nonverbal cues.

Again, while a translator may have a greater awareness of the cultural and social context in which the translated text was produced, this awareness is achieved by a deliberate meticulous analysis. An interpreter's awareness is less of an analytical and more of an existential nature. In my own experience both as a translator and an interpreter, interpreting has left a far brighter range of intercultural experiences. No amount of introspection gives you the insight of a lived experience – such as, in my case, resolving fist fights, dealing with medical emergencies and broken buses – all the while observing the reactions and behaviors of the two parties and noting the differences.

Even some interpreting situations don't pass the test of complete immersion. Conference interpreters, for example, may work in soundproof booths where they don't see the speaker, and the only nonverbal cues available to them are the vocal characteristics of the speaker. The interpreter and the speaker may never meet. My focus, then, should be on a group of interpreters who have the direct experience of working with the people they translate for – community interpreters.

It is worth noting, however, that in the case of the Russian language service industry (which was the subject of my study) it is very hard to isolate professionals who do only community interpreting. There are no distinct lines between oral interpreters and written translators in the industry itself or in language education. Incidentally, in Russian both professions are described with the same word, *переводчик*. Combined with an almost complete absence of regulations and strict protocols (in comparison to the heavily regulated and legislatively burdened American service industry), these conditions create

an environment where most professional do both written and oral work, in different contexts and at different levels. The boundaries of the already fuzzy term community interpreting need to be made even more permeable to allow for the fuzziness of the industry.

Finally, there is no need to rush in divorcing interpreting studies and translation studies, especially in a dissertation that draws on the theories from several disciplines. With such an interdisciplinary approach, translation studies are the nearest neighbor of interpreting studies: a neighbor that is different from translation studies, yet more similar to it than any other discipline. So my focus in on community interpreters but without losing sight of two larger groups – interpreters in general and linguistic mediators in general (both interpreters and translators).

Interpersonal vs. cultural

A community interpreter is closer to the people for who he or she is translating *physically;* but does that mean also that there is a shorter *interpersonal* distance? This is not necessarily so, but it is a point worth discussing in some detail.

In a hugely influential volume on interpersonal communication, Miller and Steinberg (1975) make a distinction between cultural, sociological, and psychological levels of interaction. According to these authors, in initial encounters people rely on cultural expectations and stereotypes to determine their communicative actions. As they learn more about their party's social standing, they start using more precise social expectations to guide their choices. It is only over time that they learn enough about their party as an individual to reach a psychological level of communication. Based on this

three-phase model, very few dyadic interactions are at the psychological level and are deep enough to qualify as *interpersonal* communication.

Community interpreters may have enough time and information to develop the relationships with their clients to reach the interpersonal level, yet they may want to avoid that for fear of getting personally attached to the clients and becoming vulnerable. But there is another reason that prevents them from reaching the interpersonal level. Miller and Steinberg's model describes a monocultural communicative situation. In such a case, there may be a smooth progression from the larger group perceptions (cultural) to smaller groups (social) to individual treatment (psychological). Yet in a multicultural environment the movement is not necessarily unidirectional, from the group to the individual.

Kramer (1997) cites a case dealing with Western sojourners in Japan. They had initial culture shock. They tried dealing with Japanese using existing cultural stereotypes and failed miserably. As their relationships with the Japanese developed, they learned to deal with their closest contacts at the interpersonal level. Their comfort levels went up. Yet after a while, as they gained a deeper understanding of the Japanese culture and gained an insider perspective on the behavior of their friends, they felt alienated again. They realized the vastness of cultural difference between their frames of reference and those of their friends[2].

In Miller and Steinberg's terms, the sojourners went from the cultural to psychological and then back to cultural. Their experience is similar to that of community interpreters – as they gain cultural competence in a foreign culture, the cultural becomes more and more tangible rather than taken for granted. For them, then, the cultural will not

lose significance and become part of the background over time. It will remain as the foreground in their communicative behavior.

Professionals vs. bilinguals

Another social group that is similar to community interpreters is bilingual / multilingual people. Just like community interpreters, they may have daily interactions with representatives of cultures other than their own. They may have an acute awareness of different cultural frames and an accompanying internal transformation. How is their experience different from that of community interpreters?

There are several differences; but the essential one is the issue of representation. In intercultural encounters, bilinguals represent themselves, while professional mediators are a third party, and are expected to represent the parties' interests. The problem of visibility arises out of the conflict between wanting to represent oneself (as a bilingual would) and the expectation to be impartial and represent others. With bilinguals, visibility is a non-issue. Therefore, their experience is irrelevant to my study.

Less significant differences between a bilingual and a professional are about formality and education. First, what distinguishes the professional interactions from the other intercultural encounters is the formal codes of behavior, or, in Goffman's (1974) terms, the codes of conduct[3]. This doesn't apply only to what the professional *must* do; but also to what she *must not* do. Failure to adhere to these rules may have dire consequences for the professional, including the loss of her job or even criminal liability. Compare a conversation between a Belgian and a Canadian on a flight across the ocean and a business meeting between an American academic counselor and a Nigerian student. The former is constrained only by rules of politeness and the personal moral obligations

of the parties; the latter is structured not only by politeness and ethics like the former, but, at least on the counselor's side, by strict professional rules that prescribe appropriate behavior in that situation. In a similar fashion, translators are required by their professional ethics to adhere to a certain code of behavior, which prescribe them to follow the traditions of the profession and describe correct and desirable behavior of a good translator (Schjoldager, 1995).

Second, in many cases education sets professionals and bilinguals apart. The professional's initiation into the new culture usually occurs through formal learning rather than direct contact with the culture. The learning is conscious and deliberate, and at least to some degree systematic. For most other people, intercultural contacts occur spontaneously, on the go, and the knowledge about them comes from experience not from learning[4]. The situation of a professional conference interpreter working at the General Assembly of the United Nations is very different from that of a bilingual child translating for her mother and the medical personnel in a hospital. The interpreter has had formal training to prepare him for his work; the child most likely has had none. In some cases, the professional has even been *certified* as possessing sufficient knowledge and skill to serve as a facilitator in a given cross-cultural encounter.

However, the amount of required certification will differ according to the context of translation; for example, legal interpreters may face stricter regulations than ad hoc community interpreters, in whose case their educational qualifications or even their linguistic and cultural provenance may be sufficient to be 'certified' as fit for the job. Also, in comparing bilinguals and professionals we should be careful not to idealize the linguistic and cultural competence of translators and interpreters and treat them as perfect

bilingual / bicultural individuals (Pokorn, 2006). The recognition of the role of the context in translation has not only changed the perceptions of what translation is about; it has also changed the understanding of what the translator must know to be considered satisfactory.

Pokorn (2006) traces the evolution of the understanding of translators' duties from linguistic to linguistic *and* cultural mediation. As cultural and contextual approaches become more popular, the translator is no longer expected only to be fluent in the languages she is working with, but also to be familiar with the cultures, traditions, and mindsets of the communities that she translates for. The assumption is that the translator not only approaches the fluency of a native speaker; but speaks and behaves like the member of the culture.

According to Pokorn (2006), few working translators pass the native fluency requirement, let alone the increased cultural membership requirement. She warns against assuming that the ideal of a perfect cultural mediator is a reflection of the state of affairs in the profession, or that it might be plausible to expect the profession to match these expectations in the future.

In a situation involving a translator sufficiently proficient linguistically and culturally, the main difference between bilinguals and professionals is representation; but they may also differ in the amount of education and in the presence of scripted, formal elements in the translational encounters.

Bilinguals vs. monolinguals

I have distinguished between face-to-face immediate contact with other cultures that interpreters have and the non-interpersonal work of translators and conference

interpreters. Yet for both interpreters and translators the interactions are *direct* in the sense that they have direct access to the text linguistically. The same applies to bilingual people. How are they different then from the other people, from the monolingual and the monocultural people of the world?

Even today, a great proportion of the world's population lives in predominantly local, closed communities. Their contact with the outside multicultural world is limited to media exposure and service encounters[5]. There are cultural and linguistic barriers to direct, unmediated communication[6]. In a direct scenario, a person has the linguistic and cultural knowledge necessary for the unmediated contact with the representative of other cultures. Without the needed knowledge, the interaction can only proceed with minimal speed and efficiency; its scope is reduced to standard situations, such as service encounters. In a mediated scenario, a person lacks the skills needed for direct contact and has to rely on a translational medium – whether it be a person, a radio station, or a television set.

In a mediated scenario, foreign cultural elements can be easily domesticated and re-interpreted within the local frames of reference, stripped of their original significance and power. During a recent trip to Moscow, I met with my uncle. He showed up in a camouflage baseball cap with the word 'Rebel' and the Confederate flag embroidered on it. The artifact has lost its original cultural meaning and communicative potential. A hat with a Confederate flag can be worn in Moscow and produce no effect on the onlookers; but it can also be worn by the wearer without any allegiance to the respective political views.

Domesticated foreign elements don't require a change in values and worldviews – at least not on the same scale as when these elements are communicated in their original linguistic and cultural context, as is the case with bilingual / multilingual people. That is why the scope of my study will be restricted only to people who have direct unmediated contact with the members of other speech communities.

Final definition of the subject

My study will focus on community interpreters - people who serve as *bridges between members of different cultures (or speech communities) separated by a lack of common language. These people are immediately present in the interpreting situation and have face-to-face contact with the parties for whom they are translating*. I am interested in investigating how the identity of these people (the makeup of their cultural identity because of their exposure to multiple cultures) relates to their active or passive role in the interpreting process (the issue of personal involvement).

Chapter 1: The Relationship between Cultural Identity and Personal Involvement

> Je me promène dans les jardins étrangers pour y cuellir des fleurs pour ma langue, comme à la fiancée de ma manière de penser; j'observe les mœurs étrangères afin de sacrificer les miennes au génie de ma patrie, comme autant de fruits mûris sous un soleil étranger.
>
> Johann Gottfried Herder[7]

Identity and behavior

An often unspoken assumption of Western social science is that different people will behave differently under the same conditions because of their internal makeup, presented under diverse labels, such as character, mindset, worldview, identity and so on. The internal differences will lead to external differences. The link between identity and behavior will be taken for granted here (however philosophically unsound it may be); but what remains to be shown is that a link between two particulars parts of these two wholes is also warranted, that cultural identity and personal involvement are related. To explain this relationship, I will continue to build on the definition of culture presented earlier that views communication as an active process – a process that forms identities and worldviews, creates communities and the ties to these communities.

First, I assume (after Sapir [1995, 1996]) and Whorf [1956]) that each language carries within it a unique set of beliefs and values. Second, learning a language is inseparable from learning the cultural norms, and fluency consists in the acceptance by

the target speech community (after Hymes [1968, 1971, 1972]). Third, once you learn the language and become a member of a community, you cannot help but identify with that community (after Burke [1941]).

Linguistic relativity

The notion of language influencing thought and reality was advanced by Edward Sapir and his disciple, Benjamin Whorf, and later became known as linguistic relativity, or Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The idea of linguistic relativity has had an enormous influence on the development of social sciences. It fits within the tradition of the sociology of knowledge where knowledge is not viewed "as a relation between a knower and the world but as a relation between different knowers" (Gonthier, 2006, p. 6). Wittgenstein's (1953/2001) language games, Kuhn's paradigms (1960/1996), Foucault's (1970, 1972, 1979) discursive formations and regimes of truth all fit into this tradition. For example, Wittgenstein famously contested the notion that a lion suddenly in possession of speech could talk to humans and give them an insight into the worldview of lions. Learning the human language would have transformed the lion's worldview, so the story would not be accurate anymore. The human language is not simply a transparent code; it is a mode of expression that has a fundamental effect on thinking.

While the tradition of the sociology of knowledge looks at larger discursive structures and the ways the dominant structures structure the social lifeworld, linguistic relativity is not necessarily concerned with the societal level, but rather looks at the micro level and documents the way the code structures the message. Neither one of the approaches assumes an intent, a *telos;* it simply documents what is happening without the

accompanying analysis why it is happening and who wants to make it happen. They don't directly deal with the rhetorical, persuasive component of the messages that are produced.

According to Sapir (1995, 1996), all cultural behavior is patterned; that is, following a series of norms, most often unspoken. Language, as one instance of cultural behavior, is patterned as well. These patterns vary from language to language. They are the sum of the experience of a particular community, and not a reflection of universal natural phenomena.

The hypothesis explicitly states the implicit connection between language, culture, and worldview. Since linguistic forms largely influence how we process sensory data, speakers of different languages will parcel reality differently, and as a result develop distinct worldviews. This profound difference often goes far beyond minor semantic variation; it is a difference in the deep structure (not in Chomskian terms) of the language.

Whorf (1956) illustrates this point in his comparison of SAE (Standard Average European) and Hopi. All SAE languages come from the Indo-European family and have similar grammatical and syntactical structures. This allows to translate from one SAE language to another with relative ease and equivalence. SAE categories, however, do not work well with languages vastly different from the Indo-European family, such as Hopi.

Hopi employs a different tense system; where SAE has three tenses, Hopi has two categories, actualized and expected, that roughly correspond to SAE tenses. These categories are supplemented by several verbal modalities, in a fashion entirely foreign to SAE speakers. The Hopi tense system does not divide time into past, present, and future, and therefore does not objectify time like SAE does. In fact, the notion of dividing time is

foreign to the Hopi worldview, while it is a very prominent feature of SAE, where it is common to compartmentalize reality both temporally and spatially. As a result, SAE speakers think in terms of objects, things with clear boundaries; Hopi speakers focus on events. In sum, many "common sense" Hopi categories, or in Whorf's (1956) terms, "natural logic" categories, are nearly incomprehensible to a SAE speaker, at least not without a lengthy explanation.

A bilingual / multilingual community interpreter, then, will have access to two or more distinct, and potentially divergent worldviews, through the knowledge of multiple languages. Direct access to these worldviews will give the interpreter the possibility of becoming an insider in the speech community where a given language is spoken, and to become a member of this community.

Ethnography of communication

My definition of culture is based on Philipsen's (1987) reworking of the ideas of Dell Hymes (1968). Hymes' work follows on the tradition of viewing language as action rather than simply a text, that can be traced back to the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953/2001) and John Austin (1975). Hymes (1968) defines a speech community as a "community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules of interpretation of at least one linguistic variety" (p. 54). This is a definition that is qualitative and concerned with " the norms for the use of language" (p. 53). Rather than treat sociolinguistic systems at the "level of national states", Hymes prefers to focus on "individual communities and groups" (p. 53).

Hymes's approach calls for three conditions:

1) focus on the micro rather than the macro level (individual communities vs. global/national systems);
2) focus on the norms and rules that govern the use of language rather than on linguistic structures (pragmatics and semantics vs. grammar and syntax);
3) as a consequence of the first two, focus on knowledge of the rules as a key to belonging to a certain speech community (i.e. membership in a speech community is known by the enactment of communicative rules).[8]

Hymes is also proposing an approach to the study of communicative phenomena from an ethnographic perspective, hence the term "ethnography of speaking" / "ethnography of communication". He insists that the connection between language, culture and society must be studied from a communicative rather than a linguistic perspective.

He also makes it clear that the only "worthwhile" way of studying linguistic phenomena and their place in constructing culture is an emic perspective, when a researcher is trying to see the language practices from the point of view of the studied speech community, and not from the "standard" or "normal", "universal" position (which would amount to the commonly used etic perspective). The result of emic approaches is the discovery of what Hymes calls "homemade models", which is vastly different from the etic researcher's attempts to impose an external model on the interactions observed in a speech community. The emic researcher that Hymes is taking sides with is allowing the members of the speech community to determine what meaning is assigned to messages; the members also decide what counts as a message and what doesn't. The emic researcher derives both the structure of interaction and the meaning of its components from the community studied.

A given community does not only decide on the meaning of messages; it is in turn constructed by communicative events, or speech acts. These acts are the smallest building blocks that carry not only linguistic meaning, but also the social and cultural meaning. They are embedded in a particular social context that is governed by rules, both implicit or explicit. That is why the study of speech acts can reveal how communities are organized and maintained. By analyzing speech acts in their context and seeing them as manifestations of rules, we can make the rules explicit and describe the underlying assumptions and values of a community. Hymes shows how ethnography of communication is the best approach for such a study of communities because communication is the most important vehicle of social organization and ethnography provides the optimal method of studying it.[9]

Identification

The acquisition of the cultural knowledge needed for the interpreter's work is accompanied by an increased awareness and understanding of the cultural values that are typical for the community with which they are interacting. As long as they must speak and behave like the members of the other community, they cannot help but *feel* like the members of that community.

As was stated earlier, competence within a given speech community gives the individual insights into the worldview of that community, into their moral views and value systems. Moreover, it engenders some internalization of these values. The acquisition of a new language, of a new linguistic code, doesn't only give a person, as it were, the contents of the argument; but the very terms of the argument itself. Speaking

like a member of community makes you *be* like a member of that community. Competence is accompanied by identification.

Identification is different from identity. Identity is a much bigger concept that in its broadest sense can be equated with self. Because of its breadth, it is also a notoriously fuzzy concept, like culture or competence. Identification can be seen as a subset of identity, dealing with the social dimension of it (Turner, 1987). When people identify with a social group, they are prepared to make sacrifices for it (Triandis, 1988). They feel like they are part of that community. For Burke (1950/1969), identification brings membership, but also control over the individual. Once identification is achieved, the individual internalizes and supports societal norms and values. In that respect, identification is not unlike Gramsci's (1971) hegemony or Tompkins' concertive control (Tompkins, 1985; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). Through identifying with various social groups, an individual constructs a unique self. But group membership doesn't only bring the benefits of status and belonging – it serves as a persuasive, rhetorical device in that the individual tends to support and approve of the social groups that he is a member of. In the interpreter's case, we may be dealing with a self-persuasion of sorts – an inclination to identify with certain speech communities through the use of their respective languages.

The link between cultural identity and personal involvement

Interpreters, by the nature of their work, must be competent in at least two speech codes. The greater the knowledge of the code, the more identification they will feel with the communities that they are serving. In most cases, the communities will have a different history, resulting in diverging traditions, values, and ethical standards. These

differences will present the interpreter with potentially conflicting worldviews, that the interpreter will have to reconcile in one way or the other.

Perhaps the interpreter will choose the strategy of avoidance – by minimizing personal involvement in the interpretive act, the interpreter will perceive his or her role as that of a passive conduit of other people's ideas. Given the above discussion on identification, such complete non-involvement doesn't seem plausible. Or perhaps the interpreter will allow their cultural identity to influence their work and actively intervene in the communicative situation in ways that help them reconcile the conflicting values that they have to work with. For example, if an interpreter is working with two languages and happens to believe that one of the two cultural systems is morally superior to the other, and if his or her identity is based on that system, the interpreter may engage in interventions benefiting the party representing that system.

My study is aimed at describing the link between cultural identity and personal involvement. Does knowledge of different languages indeed make one feel like a member of the respective speech communities and bring identification with them? Does it lead to a conflict of values? How is this conflict resolved? What kinds of interventions are used and why?

To answer these questions, I need to describe the terms of my argument in more detail. First, I need to describe cultural identity and the possible stances on it. Second, I need to describe the source and the consequences of interpreters' interventions. These two tasks will serve as reviews of the two relevant fields of literature – intercultural communication and translation / interpreting studies.

Chapter 2: Cultural Identity

> Wie Einem Lande, so Einer Sprache oder der andern, muß der Mensch sich entschließen anzugehören, oder er schwebt haltungslos in unerfreulicher Mitte.
>
> Friedrich Schleiermacher[10]

Being intercultural

The issue of cultural identity has been raised in the translation studies literature, most importantly in a discussion between Venuti (1994) and Snell-Hornby (1999). Venuti argued that translation contributes to the formation of cultural identities by establishing "peculiarly domestic canons for foreign cultures" (p. 202). He gives an example of English translations of modern Japanese novels. The editors choose novels that would not contradict the domestic stereotypes about the Japanese and present them as "elusive, misty, inconclusive" (p. 205). Cultural identity for Venuti is the accepted image of one culture by another culture – it is about perceptions, impressions, stereotypes, views that are established and maintained through social and political institutions. While Venuti's argument about domestication of foreign discourses through selective translations is certainly viable, his choice of the term 'cultural identity' to describe social stereotyping contradicts the vast existing literature on identity where it is a psychological concept, an individual-level quality.

Snell-Hornby (1999) dismisses such view of cultural identity as a misnomer. Rather than seeing it as a "constructed cliché or stereotype" (p. 106), she offers her

definition of cultural identity based on the work of Claessens (1991), describing it as a "collective self-definition and a sense of belonging… and awareness of those features characterizing one's own community and of those characterizing the other" (p. 105). It is in this sense of belonging to a speech community that I will use the term cultural identity here.

The interpreter's identity in general will have an influence on their behavior. Cultural identity in particular is an important facet of identity and the cornerstone of my study. Who are interpreters culturally? Do they perceive themselves as members of the communities that they are serving? Do they see one community as superior to the other(s)? Do they see them as distinct entities at all?

So I need to find out what it is like to be an intercultural communicator. But the question about being intercultural has a corollary – that about becoming intercultural (Kim, 2001). A great proportion of the literature in intercultural communication is aimed at assisting with the transition from the monocultural to the intercultural – by raising awareness of the other cultures, becoming more tolerant, adjusting to the other, gaining communication competence. This literature is about a change process: about adjustment, adaptation, transformation. My goal here is not to track changes to the intercultural, but to study what it is like to *be* intercultural. I am interested in finding out what influence this intercultural identity may have on the interpreter's work. It is important to know how the interpreter became intercultural only inasmuch as it helps to answer my main question, the nature of the relationship between cultural identity and personal involvement of interpreters.

The interpreter will be familiar with two or more languages and their respective cultures. The interpreter's cultural identity will be based on one or several of these speech communities. Based on the review of theories in intercultural communication, translation and interpreting studies, and cultural studies, the variety of possible cultural identities can be reduced to four broad types: 1) dependence on a single culture (e.g. 'East or West, home is best'); 2) acceptance of multiple speech communities known to the interpreter ('friend of all the world'); 3) dependence on a third professional *interculture* (Pym, 2002, 2003, 2004); and 4) isolation, the feeling of not belonging to any culture – the in-between (Anzaldúa, 1987, 1990, 2000, 2002a, 2002b) or the cultural exile (Said, 2000). I will use this classification as the foundation for my investigation of the cultural identity of interpreters.

Dependence on a single culture

In the first scenario, an interpreter's identity will be centered around a single speech community from the two or more that he or she is familiar with. It may be the native community for the interpreter; or it may be a foreign community that over time replaces the native and takes a central place.

An identity based on a single culture is an old story – so old that its archetype can be found in mythology and folklore. This archetype is described in Campbell's work (1968, 1991) on comparative mythology.

Campbell believed that mythology is a way of describing human experience, and an aid in coping with the challenges of the world. Through spiritual experiences that transcend the everyday world, they serve the functions that in modern societies have been largely replaced by political and economical institutions.

Campbell's survey of mythology revealed a common theme behind the myths of the world. The common template (that he labeled the monomyth, borrowing a term from James Joyce) is usually framed in terms of a heroic journey. A hero's journey begins at home, in the familiar environment. The hero is thrown out of the everyday world by an unexpected turn of events, or by a quest for a lost treasure. In Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* epic, Frodo Baggins is forced to leave the peaceful environment of his native land, the Shire, with the goal of destroying the Ring of Power.

Having left home, the hero is subjected to a series of trials, whether it be slaying monsters (as is the case with the Arthurian legends), or resisting temptations (Christ's trials in the desert). At the end of the trials, the hero fulfils the goal of the journey. For example, Jason, the leader of the Argonauts, seizes the Golden Fleece, that is the purpose of his perilous voyage from Greece to Colchis.

Finally, the hero returns home with the treasure, sometimes reluctantly. The hero returns as a new person and may feel out of place in the familiar surroundings. In *The Hobbit,* Bilbo Baggins, long taken for dead, comes back to the Shire one day with bagfuls of dragon gold, and earns a freak status for the rest of his life for behaving out of the hobbit norm.

According to Campbell, the main lesson of the monomyth is taking responsibility for your actions and understanding your place in the universe. A hero’s journey brings a maturation, that is the understanding of one’s own mortality and the coming to terms with life. It is a transcendence of one’s own limited environment and an appreciation of a larger mysterious world around us. The hero's main achievement is not the treasure that was brought back; it is the spiritual transformation that occurs: one’s own self is left

behind, or, rather, the centrality of self. Home is the start and the destination of the journey (and in a sense, its purpose as well).

The hero's journey is a journey made by a person who was exposed to two communities, but who chooses to return home and who gains a new appreciation of the home. It is an example of an identity based on a single culture, this time on the native culture. Other examples would include the cannibalistic approach (Vieira, 1994)[11] where again the center is the native culture.

Acceptance of multiple cultures

There is also a possibility of a more open identity, that is not centered on a single culture, but is more inclusive. Many theories are based on the assumption that such an identity is the end goal of any intercultural experience. Young Kim's integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation and communication (1988, 1991, 2001) is a fine example of such a theory.

Kim sets out to create a theory that will describe the experience of strangers (after Simmel, 1950) in a new culture, regardless of the length of their stay or reasons for relocation (voluntary or forced), and will explain the phenomenon of adjusting to a new culture on the individual, group, and societal levels. The theory rests on several key assumptions. First, adapting to the new culture involves the learning of new cultural elements (enculturation) and the un-learning of some of the old cultural elements (deculturation). Second, adaptation is seen as an inevitable, natural reaction to a new environment. There will be some individual variation in the degree of conforming to the new cultural norms; so the theory's goal is to explain why some individuals adapt faster than others.

Third, adaptation is driven by stress. Stress is generated by unfamiliar surroundings and situations; it pushes the individual to search for coping strategies, adapting to the new environment; finally, as a result of learning new strategies, some growth occurs. Repeated cycles of the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic take the person to increasingly high levels of adjustment.

According to the theory, the outcomes of adaptation are threefold: strangers are able to feel less tension (psychological health), interact with the locals successfully and achieve pragmatic goals (functional fitness), and finally, they start feeling, so to speak, at one with the universe: they no longer see their home culture or receiving culture as superior; they gain appreciation for different cultural ways and eventually transcend cultural differences as they gain a new cosmopolitan identity (intercultural personhood).

The notion of the intercultural personhood is an example of an inclusive cultural identity that doesn't have a single center. According to Kim, such an identity is possible thanks to two transformations: re-categorization and de-categorization. The interactants reconsider the group boundaries to create a superordinate group that includes all the groups originally involved (recategorization) and interaction between members is based on individual characteristics rather than group stereotypes (decategorization). Gaertner et al. (1996) add that recategorization and decategorization are complementary processes: boundaries are removed first, individualized interaction follows.

Kim's theory is not the only example of conceptualizing an inclusive cultural identity. The literature on intercultural communication competence (Martin, 1993; Carbaugh, 1993; DeTurk, 2001) includes a similar argument; so do discussions of multicultural competence (Baumann, 1999; Cortés, 2002; Pope-Davis, Coleman, Liu, &

Toporek, 2003; Rogers, 1996) and the research on the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1969; Ford, 1986; Hewstone & Brown, 1986; Pettigrew, 1986; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000).

Intercultural communication competence is a culture-general set of skills (i.e. independent of a single culture but applicable to all cultures), attitudes and behaviors that is applicable across all contexts (Wiseman, 2002). In a similar vein, Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004) define multicultural competence as "awareness, knowledge and skills that are needed to work effectively across cultural groups and to work with complex diversity issues" (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004, p. xiv). The "contact hypothesis" (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1969; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000) is the assumption that intercultural and interracial contact, when it happens under the right conditions, brings social groups more positive attitudes towards each other.

The three approaches run into similar difficulties stemming from the need to create a culture-general theory applicable across a mind-boggling variety of contexts[12]. Another problem is the highly politicized nature of much of this research. This is particularly applicable to the contact hypothesis studies (Brewer & Miller, 1996; Hewstone & Brown, 1986; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000). They began after the World War II as "an organized effort in North America to end prejudice" (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000, p. 93). They continued in the 1960s and 70s as an attempt to provide a scientific backing for desegregation and mixed racial and ethnic environments, and political agendas continue to play an important role in contact research to this day (Brewer & Miller, 1996).

Regardless of the problems that these research traditions run into, the notion of an inclusive cultural identity – labeled as multiculturalism, tolerance, intercultural

personhood, or what not – continues to be a prominent theme in the academe, as well as the prevalent theme in the social and cultural landscape of the Western world, and is certainly a plausible option for the identity of interpreters.

Intercultures

Interpreters focus their cultural identity on a single existing speech community or to embrace all the communities they work with; but they can also create a new community. As a special group of professionals, they form a distinct community that combines cultural elements from other communities, but is unique among them.

Pym's (2002, 2003, 2004) discussion of intercultures is dedicated to such a professional culture. He chooses a particular social group for his analysis – that of professional intercultural communicators such as translators and diplomats. The foundation of Pym's approach is a cost-benefit analysis. He sees the professionals that he is describing as rational pragmatic beings who try to maximize their personal gains, as well as serve the high-order goal of fostering long-term cooperation.

For Pym, these professionals are members of an interculture, combining elements of two or more cultures at the same time. They serve as agents of cooperation between cultures (which, according to Pym, is the only goal of intercultural communication worth pursuing). He sees intercultures as secondary to cultures – humans learn the original cultural system first, and then later on acquire knowledge of one or several other cultures, which makes them a member of an interculture. But Pym also notes the possibility of a reverse process: these cross-border mixes are usually the material from which cultures are born.

One of the cornerstones of his analysis is the issue of trust. He argues that while the members of a culture rely on trust, members of an interculture have to rely on reason. An English-speaking person knows that "pulling a leg" is playing a practical joke on someone; but a translator for whom English is not a native language must fall back on the acquired language knowledge to interpret the expression. For the native speaker, correct pronunciation comes naturally and effortlessly; the non-native translator learns to emulate correct diction, generally after a lengthy and laborious learning process. So the professionals have to use reason to convince the audience of their linguistic and cultural skills, while the natives' skills are trusted and taken for granted.

Because of this lack of natural trust, professionals go to great lengths to reaffirm their expertise. This can take various forms – from claiming divine intervention in a translation of a sacred text to joining professional organizations and relying on the latest technology. But according to Pym, the neutrality of an intercultural professional is always compromised by the "accents or traces of their provenance":

> There is no reason to expect the intermediaries to be neutral, somehow perfectly balanced between the competing cultures of our world. But they have every professional interest in appearing to be neutral, usually on a higher level, and in gaining trust on that basis. Neutrality is not natural; it has to be created (Pym, 2004, p. 178).

Members of an interculture have to use their expertise to manufacture their identity. They need to do so because their livelihood depends on it. Thus an interculture, a space that overlaps the home and the foreign world and allows the professional to move freely from one culture to another, is a product of the professionals' unique knowledge that sets him

or her apart from the general population. It is also a product of deliberate manipulation done for pragmatic reasons.

Exile

The three versions of cultural identity presented so far relied on embracing one culture, embracing them all, or creating a new one. The fourth version, that after Said (2000) I will call exile, is based on a denial of existing cultures.

Said's exile is a forced relocation due to political reasons – either the individual leaves the home country before conditions become gruesome or he is thrown out by the government. In both cases, the outcast is banished from returning – unless the political circumstances change. For Said, suffering and helplessness are the central themes of the exile condition. The separation from home is so painful that he likens it to death, "only without death's ultimate mercy" (p. 174).

He notes that the experiences of exiles are often unnoticed, with the public and the media focusing on the more glamorous examples of "successful" international travel. He believes this positive presentation to be unethical and urges the reader to "first set aside Joyce and Nabokov and think instead of the uncountable masses for whom UN agencies have been created" (p. 175). Contrary to the popular belief, the experience of exiles is more common than most of the public is willing to accept:

> Paris may be a capital famous for cosmopolitan elites, but is also a city where unknown men and women have spent years of miserable loneliness: Vietnamese, Algerians, Cambodians, Lebanese, Senegalese, Peruvians (p. 176).

The experience of exiles often goes unnoticed because they literally don't have a voice – they lack linguistic skills, but even more often they lack power to gain access to any media through which they can broadcast their misery to the world. They remain precariously positioned in their new cultural setting, connected just enough to survive. They remain, in Kramer's (1997) words, surface dwellers.

Psychologically, the separation from home often results in a refusal to adjust to the new cultural environment: "isolation and displacement produces the kind of narcissistic masochism that resists all efforts at amelioration, acculturation, and community" (p. 183). Thus a lack of adjustment, rather than continuous adjustment (as is the case with adaptation) is the defining element of the exile condition.

A similar experience of a denial of existing cultures (and at the same time a denial *by* existing cultures) is presented by Gloria Anzaldúa (1987, 1990, 2000, 2002a, 2002b) in her discussion of Borderlands. It is a space where different cultural realities interact, clash, and mix. The Borderlands can correspond to a physical space (such as the area along the US-Mexico border) or a to the psychological space of having your identity composed of multiple cultural elements. According to Anzaldúa, it is a condition accompanied by a psychic restlessness:

> Like others having or living in more than one culture, we get multiple, often opposing messages. The coming together of two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference causes a cultural collision (Anzaldúa 1990, p. 378)

It is a state of "constant disorientation,… ambivalence, indecisiveness, insecurity, and perplexity" (Foss, Foss, & Griffin, 1999, p. 106). This uncomfortable condition leads to

feelings of self-abnegation and psychic restlessness – a perspective that is certainly nothing new in intercultural theory, reminiscent of many other theories, such as Kim's theory of cross-cultural adaptation, where a similar concept is presented under the labels of "psychological health" and "stress".

But Anzaldúa adds a second important dimension to the Borderlands condition. It is not all about psychic restlessness; there is also the silencing of the inhabitants by the dominant culture. The silencing comes from the denial of a segmented identity. The dominant culture expects the inhabitants to line up with one culture and label themselves accordingly. Anzaldúa vehemently opposes such an approach:

> What am I? A third world lesbian feminist with Marxist and mystic leanings. They would chop me up into little fragments and tag each piece with a label (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 205).

She wants a way of talking about a mixed identity "without cutting it up" (Anzaldúa, 2000, p. 132) because it is more like a river or a mountain range:

> For me there aren't little cubbyholes with all the different identities – intellectual, racial, sexual. It's more like a fine membrane – sort of like a river, an identity is sort of like a river. It's one and it's flowing and it's a process. By giving different names to different parts of a single mountain range or different parts of the river, we are doing that entity a disservice (Anzaldúa, 2000, p. 132).

This mountain range is made up of elements from different times and spaces, to create an amalgamated *mestiza* identity that is "an arrangement or series of clusters, a kind of a stacking or layering of selves, horizontal and vertical layers, the geography of selves

made up of the different communities you inhabit" (Anzaldúa, 2000, p. 238). Throughout her writing career, and indeed throughout her life and activism, Anzaldúa was struggling with ways to describe the *mestiza* identity and to theorize about it.

In the end, the Borderlands are a two-sided phenomenon – on the one hand, an oppressing force that denies the unique viewpoints of multifaceted identities; on the other hand, a space with an immense potential. The first condition is a consequence of the conservative social order; the second is an opportunity for activism and resistance. It is a chance to follow Anzaldúa's call for freedom from racial, social, and gender labels.

> I want the freedom to carve and chisel my own face, to staunch the bleeding with ashes, to fashion my own gods out of my entrails… I will have to stand and claim my space, making a new culture – *una cultura mestiza* - with my own lumber, my own bricks and mortar and my own feminist architecture (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 22)

A person following the *mestiza* ethics is in a unique position on the thresholds of multiple cultures (Keating, 2006) where (s)he serves as a bridge between the cultures, which entails "being available to others at all times, serving as the mediator among self, community, and other and cultures whenever necessary" (Foss, Foss, & Griffin, 1999, p. 120). Such a person uses her intercultural experience for assisting others in their own journeys.

In sum, both Said and Anzaldzúa describe an identity that cannot fit existing cultural categories because of political and economic reasons. Unique linguistic knowledge does not only elevate interpreters above the rank and file (as the discussion of intercultures suggests); it can also turn them into outcasts. Cronin (2002) describes this

contradiction very well: "Interpreters become recurring objects of ambivalence, in-between figures, loathed and admired, privileged and despised" (p. 55). The metaphor of the exile focuses on the negative side of the interpreter's work and can be a valid foundation for his or her cultural identity.

Key aspects of cultural identity

I have presented four options for the interpreter's cultural identity – centered around a single culture or many, dependent on a professional culture, or falling in between existing cultures. This list of options is not necessarily exhaustive or organized in the best way possible; but it will do as a starting point. The dazzling variety of intercultural experiences means that there are many ways of describing and conceiving it[13]. In the theories we saw above, the theorist's environment was driving the creation of the theory, resulting in a description grounded in reality. There is a resemblance between the reality portrayed by the theories and the lives of the theorists themselves. For example, Said spent most of his life in exile from his homeland in the Middle East, and his writing about identity is largely about exile; Kim has had a very successful academic career that was possible thanks to her willingness to adjust to the new environment, and her theory is about adaptation; Anzaldúa has struggled with finding a place in the academe that would accept her as she was, and her work is about the in-between.

Regardless of the claims of their creators, all the above theories are equally bad candidates for a universal theory – simply because such an all-embracing theory is rendered impossible by the complexity and the diversity of the phenomenon. A universally applicable story would have to be so trivial to account for the various narratives that it would hardly be illuminating (would you be content with a statement

like "people come into contact with other people and are changed as a result" as a general theory of cultural identity?)[14]

My four-part taxonomy also reveals what concepts might be central to cultural identity. In the theories described above, there was a variety of views on culture and identity, providing a range of possibilities for interpreters to base their self-perceptions on. Three concepts emerge as the key aspects of cultural identity.

1) A person who grows up bilingual or multilingual will have a different cultural identity than a person who becomes such.

A person who grows up in a monolingual environment and then travels to a location where a different language is spoken is going to have a different experience than a bilingual person traveling between two countries. Even if these two people occupy the same geographical space, they are going to see the world differently. For example, Gloria Anzaldúa's perception of the world growing up as a bilingual Chicana in Texas must have been unlike the experience of her White monolingual classmates. The difference between the monolingual and the multilingual world is so fundamental that some creators of monolingual theories (Kim's cross-cultural adaptation theory for example) explicitly state that the theory would not apply to people who grow up bilingual (so the theories would apply for example to the Midwestern teenager who grows up in a monolingual world of Oklahoma and then goes to Germany for his military service, but not to the son of the American serviceman living on an American military base in Germany and going to a German school).

2) Cultural identity may be centered around a single speech community, include multiple communities, or be based on a negation of the existing communities.

Can cultural identity contain multiple elements (let us say a Russian self and a Japanese self), as Anzaldúa suggests, or is it singular, so that newly acquired elements necessarily displace old ones (cross-cultural adaptation)? In other words, is it monocultural or multicultural? Also, is it based on existing speech communities or on a 'third culture' (professional interculture) or on the negation of (or sometimes, negation *by*) of the existing communities (exile)?

3) Values from different speech communities that form part of an interpreter's cultural identity may be in conflict with each other.

In simple terms, if a person is used to eat with a fork at home, how will she handle eating with a spoon abroad? Or more realistically, if at home competitiveness is unethical and abroad it is a virtue, what side will she take? There are two important aspects here. The conflicting values may or may not produce a cognitive dissonance. Also, the divergent sets of values may or may not be rank ordered. To use an earlier example, a person who grows up viewing competitiveness as arrogance may feel remorse when she is forced to be assertive in a different cultural environment; but she may still believe that her original view of competitiveness is superior to the acquired one.

To these three issues I must add a fourth, keeping in mind Pokorn's (2006) warning about the idealization of interpreters as perfect bilingual and bicultural communicators. All of the above rationale about the relationship between cultural identity and personal involvement will be dependent on the levels of the interpreters' linguistic and cultural competence.

4) Community interpreters' cultural identity and personal involvement are dependent on the levels of the interpreters' linguistic and cultural competence for the speech communities that they work with.

How close are they to having native fluency in the languages that they work with? Also, how fluent are they culturally? Would they liken themselves to the native levels in their knowledge of target languages and culture?

These four issues will be the basis for the investigation of cultural identity in my study. It is now time to turn to the discussion of personal involvement, the phenomenon related to and dependent on cultural identity.

Chapter 3: Personal Involvement

> L'effacement du traducteur n'a pas qu'une visée: donner l'impression que la traduction n'est pas une traduction, donner l'illusion du naturel. Quitte à effacer toutes les particularités qui appartiennent à un autre mode de signifier, effacer les distances, de temps, de langue, de culture.
>
> Henri Meschonnic[15]

Having reviewed cultural identity, I will now turn to personal involvement. In interpreting studies literature, there are at least three concepts that relate to the issue of involvement: roles, agency, and invisibility. To situate these concepts in the literature, I will begin by reviewing two broader theoretical issues – the text vs. context dichotomy and the issue of power in interpretation. These broader issues are relevant not only to interpreting, but to translation as well. Starting with them, I will then narrow down my discussion to interpreting studies literature.

Textual vs. contextual

The issue of personal involvement for both translators and interpreters relates to a larger question – is their work purely about text transfer, transcoding from one language to another, using one text to produce another, or is it an active participatory process, where the specialist's personality and the context are just as important as the text itself?

Text vs. context is just one of the many popular dichotomies in translation studies[16]. Famous binary oppositions include form vs. content – a translator can faithfully reproduce either the content or the form or the original, but not both (Savory, 1957). Even before that, the foundational division is before source and target texts, native and foreign, us and them. Derived from this archetypal pair is the opposition between foreignization and domestication. This is a very old split, expressed famously by Schleiermacher:

> Ou bien le traducteur laisse le plus possible l'écrivain en repos, et fait se mouvoir vers lui le lecteur; ou bien il laisse le lecteur le plus possible en repos, et fait se mouvoir vers lui l'écrivain (cited in Berman, 1984, p. 235)[17].

The choice in translating an exotic text of either transcoding it into familiar symbols to make it accessible or deliberately leaving unfamiliar indigenous elements in it to preserve the local flavor.

Schleiermacher's vision assumes that the two options, foreignization and domestication, are conscious choices for a translator; regardless of the choice taken, the translator has an agency. Such a situation is only possible if we take a contextual approach to translation and interprtetation. The contextual approach, by definition, assumes that some involvement must occur. The textual view leaves no place for personal involvement, ruling out agency.

In very simple terms, textual approaches to translation view it as information transfer – not unlike the Shannon and Weaver's (1964) sender-message-receiver model.[18] The focus is on the qualities of the text itself – or in this case on the two texts, the source and the target. The context in which the texts and the translators or interpreters exist is at

best a background, or perhaps even a distraction; but definitely not important enough to warrant a place on center stage. In Pöchhaker and Shlesinger's (2002) words,

> In the first decades… [t]he wider situational, interactional and sociocultural contexts, within which the activity of interpreting is carried out, were seen rather as a diffuse backdrop to the center stage (p. 205).

Predictably, contextual approaches are the opposite, maintaining that the understanding of the translation process is impossible without studying its historical, social, and political context. Alvarez and Vidal (1996) give a succinct summary of this view:

> [i]t is no longer possible to speak of a textual translation; rather, the context should always be born in mind because the opposition between "a contextual interpretation" and one that is not contextual is entirely spurious. Nothing has meaning "in isolation" (p. 3) … Translation is not the production of one text equivalent to another text, but rather a complex process of rewriting that runs parallel both to the overall view of language and of the 'Other' people have throughout history; and to the influences and the balance of power that exist between one culture and another (p.4).

The text / context dichotomy has been labeled in many different ways, such as linguistic transcoding and cultural transfer (Snell-Hornby, 1990; Vermeer, 1986). Waldensjö (1998) compares "text production (talk as text)" and "situated sense-making (talk as activity)" (p. 22), and notes that the former sees translators as "information-processing systems" and the latter as "moral human beings" (p. 30). She also notes that this dichotomy is a false one and that in reality translation and mediation are inseparable[19]. Venuti (1998) talks about a "linguistics-based orientation" (the textual) and the

"aesthetics-based orientation" (the contextual)[20]. Discussing the roles of interpreters, Paine (1971) distinguishes between the "go-betweens" (those who focus exclusively on carrying messages between the parties) and the "brokers" (those who try to resolve conflict and facilitate interactions).

As unpopular and inadequate the textual approaches may seem today, several reasons account for their former wide acceptance. One of them is the pressure from the church to be as 'faithful' as possible in Bible translations, and hence favor a word-for-word transcoding at the expense of intelligibility. Another is the popularity of Chomskyan linguistics with its universalist dogmas and the focus on "deep structures" (Chomsky, 1956) rather the contingent categories like context (Snell-Hornby, 2006). A third reason is the promise of high-quality machine translation in mid 20th century and the accompanying attempt to reduce language to information bits (Gentzler, 1998). Finally, the focus on the text at the expense of context is possible because translation scholars are often removed from translation practice.

The focus on context represents a paradigm shift in translation and interpreting studies that occurred in the last two or three decades, moving the field away from purely textual approaches[21]. The trends favoring textual approaches served as flood gates that delayed the arrival of contextual ones. However, when the contextual finally won and the symbolic dam was overthrown, the backlash was severe. Old approaches were banished as the reasons cited above lost power. Secular translation became more important than sacred translation. Chomskyan linguistics fell out of fashion. Machine-translation failed to deliver high quality output not needing human editing[22]. Professional translators protested against viewing texts in isolation from the context (Bros-Brann, 1975).

Theorists have pointed out that the information approach studies were based on a false view of a static language (Johnston, 1992) that ignored the role of context and the changes that occurred over time. Alexieva (2002) shrewdly observes that an information approach only works well in conference translation where the main subject of discussion is science and technology, that is the content is highly impersonal and less culture specific. She also notes that interpreter-mediated events differ in the degree of conflict between the goals of the participants. Conference interpreting usually occurs in situations where the level of antagonism is relatively low, thus creating an environment where translators do not need to negotiate many tensions and can simply translate literally, which requires less energy than translation with "deeper reflection" (Seleskovitch, 1975/2002)[23].

Spivak (1993) argues that translation is equivalent to reading, that is ascribing meaning to a text based on one's experience and social context. According to Spivak, any reading is translation, that is the interpretation of the text that turns it into meaningful ideas that again correspond to one's experience and surroundings. By virtually equating translation with reading, Spivak achieves several things: she shifts the attention of scholars from the text to the practice of translation itself, from search of equivalence to contextualized interpretation. By emphasizing the role of the cultural and historical context rather than the role of grammatical and syntactic structures, Spivak moves translation studies from its original home in linguistics and into the tumultuous space of cultural studies. This shift exemplifies a growing awareness among translation theorists of the roles of power and influence in the practice of interpretation. This change characterizes the translation research of the 1990s, that "seeks to combine a linguist's

attention to textual detail with a cultural historian's awareness of social and political trends" (Venutti, 2000, p. 340). Translation studies have left their "home" in linguistics and added sociology, history, and ethnography to their arsenal (Bassnett, 1998), borrowing freely from cultural studies and postcolonialism (Niranjana, 1992).

In sum, textual views are only defensible in limited environments – depoliticized, terminology-heavy, formalized. In the informal environments where community interpreters work, the context is an inseparable part of the communicative act (Waldensjö, 1998) and textual views are hardly viable. The main question for me is not whether context is important in community interpreting – the answer to that question is obviously positive. To get a more nuanced answer to this question, the global question of contextuality can be discussed in the local domain of community interpreting by turning to interpreters' roles, agency, and visibility.

But before such a grounded discussion takes place, another global question must be reviewed. Why is it even important to study the active / passive roles of interpreters and translators? Will their involvement have any noteworthy impact on the interaction? The short answer to the question is positive. The interpreter's position of a mediator who possesses more knowledge of the situation than the other participants is a position of power; a great deal depends on whether the interpreter will use this power to its full capacity. An extended answer to this question is presented in the next section.

The power of interpretation

Translators and interpreters are usually the only intermediary in the intercultural exchanges that they are facilitating. They have access to both cultural worlds; other participants have a limited access, that is effected mostly through the interpreter. As

Anderson (1976) puts it, “the [translator’s] position in the middle has the advantage of power inherent in all positions that control scarce resources” (p. 218).

In Goffman's terms, the role of the interpreter is often that of a performance supervisor – directing the action so that it goes without a hitch. Being a mediator gives the interpreter unique abilities:

> The go-between learns the secrets of each side and gives each side the true impression that he will keep its secrets; but he tends to give each side the false impression that he is more loyal to it than to the other… when a go-between operates in the actual presence of the two teams of which he is a member, we obtain a wonderful display, not unlike a man desperately trying to play tennis with himself (p. 149)
>
> Service specialists are like members of the team in that they learn the secrets of the show and obtain a backstage view of it. Unlike members of the team, however, the specialist does not share the risk, the guilt, and the satisfaction of presenting before the audience the show to which he has contributed. And, unlike members of the team, in learning the secrets of others, the others do not learn corresponding secrets about him (p. 153).

This imbalance between the low rank accorded to the role and the high amount of information that the interpreter has access to explains the power that the interpreters have, as well as the source of the "secret audience derogation" (p. 170). The clients usually have to deal with the incongruence of having a higher rank than the interpreter, but far less access to information than he or she has.

In community interpreting situations the parties are generally don't have the full awareness of the processing of information that translators are doing in front of them. The interpreter is the one who is truly communicating with both sides and getting the full story; the parties make do with limited information. The parties rely on the interpreter's reading of the situation and of the other party's emotions; this happens whether the interpreter is aware of it or not.

When translating, intepreters have a choice of stylistic and semantic options at their disposal. There are always many options, based on the context and the perceived intent of the speaker. In Umberto Eco's words, "interpreting means making a bet on the sense of the text" (Eco, 2001, p. 16). This allows for enough variation to control the situation and especially the impressions the parties make on one another. As Tymoczko and Gentzler (2002) put it, "translation is not simply an act of faithful reproduction but, rather, a deliberate and conscious act of selection, assemblage, structuration, and fabrication – and even, in some cases, of falsification, refusal of information, counterfeiting, and the creation of secret codes" (p. xxi). More research is needed to study the "politics of translation" (Bassnett, 1998, p. 138).

In very simple terms, the interpreter's power in facilitating intercultural encounters comes from the ability to translate *selectively* (Anderson, 1976). In other words, translators can intervene by consciously or unconsciously choosing which parts to translate as accurately as possible, which ones to amplify or dampen, and which ones to omit[24]. Since the participants do not possess the linguistic competence to evaluate the accuracy of the translation, the translator has a lot of control over the way he structures

the flow of information. The interpreter can also intervene by choosing to translate or to ignore the nonverbal part of the message (Poyatos, 1987)[25].

The textual approach to translation states that omissions generally occur because translation is difficult and there is room for error. Also, it states that modifications are done to ensure the smooth flow of ideas and to accommodate the requirements of the target language. According to the traditional understanding of the translation practice, deliberate interventions are needed to avoid misunderstanding (Tate & Turner, 1997). In fact, it is believed that a translator's ability to re-arrange the text to achieve optimal accessibility is an important and valuable skill, known as strategic competence (PACTE, 2000). Research shows that individuals who use translation services subscribe to the view that intervention is done for the purpose of improving understanding only[26].

Concern for clarity and accuracy is by far not the only reason for intervention. These are the textual reasons for interventions. There are, however reason for intervention that come from the context rather than the text. These are the interventions that are related to power relationships, and it is important to describe them in more detail.

One potential contextual reason for intervention is the obligations that translators have to the parties involved in the interaction. As Anderson (1976) puts it, "[the interpreter] is a "man in the middle", with some obligations to both clients – and these obligations may not be entirely compatible" (p. 211). These obligations can call for interventions not directly related to maintaining accuracy but to saving the client's face and fulfilling their interests. One common solution to this problem is to remove the strain by appointing a personal interpreter to every party involved in the interaction. This is

particularly common in important negotiations where the price of a mistranslation is too high to pay.

Because of potentially conflicting obligations to the two parties, a translator often has to make a choice about the voice for the translation. The interpretation process (and the interpreters themselves) is influenced by the relative prestige of the ethnic groups involved in the interaction (Anderson, 1976). The choice is often a very difficult one because in reality interpreters "find themselves simultaneously caught in both camps" (Tymoczko & Gentzler, 2002, p. xix).

Another potential reason for interventions is the translator's feeling of superiority. Alexieva (2002) notes that translators may exceed their responsibilities and intervene freely if they perceive that their client is inferior to them in terms of status or knowledge, as well as "command not only of the source and target languages but also of the respective cultures and specific norms of behavior relevant to the communicative situation" (p. 226). More often than not, translators find themselves in situations where they know more than any other party involved; which creates potential conditions for the feelings of superiority and interventions.

Translator interventions have a lasting impact on culture, both for the source language and for the target language. In some cases, translations enact lasting social change and have a tremendous capacity to shape the cultural landscape so that some social groups become dominant and some become dominated. The ability to participate actively in constructing culture is one of the most important power resources that translators have. While other resources are important as well, this is the one that has the most impact in the long run.

Translators and interpreters are actively involved in constructing culture. Apart from serving as a vital link between different cultures, translators participate in shaping the national languages itself. In the European Parliament, people often work with documents in languages other than their own; this often leads to linguistic contamination in the form of unnecessary loan words and "very unusual grammatical structures" (Swallow, 2003, p. 106).

On a larger scale, they can literally make history. Lianeri (2002) demonstrates how translations (or rather, deliberate mistranslations) of the Greek classics shaped the notions of democracy in 19th century England. González Ruiz (2000) describes how religious taboos that existed in the Spanish society in the middle of the 20th century have resulted in deliberate modifications of American film titles that contained sexual references. Fenton and Moon (2002) show how a translation of a major treaty disempowered the Maori population in New Zealand. In all the three cases (and especially in the last one), the choices to intervene that the respective translators have made have had a tremendous impact not only on the culture, but also on the development of the society. What is true of written translation applies equally to interpretation. In medical settings, for example, interpreter interventions may have clinical consequences, jeopardizing the patient's well being (Hsieh, 2006).

To sum it up, translators and interpreters may intervene for several reasons: to follow norms, to fulfill their obligations to clients, or to satisfy their feelings of superiority. These are just some of the examples of the reasons that may cause intervention. In fact, any contextual factor can become one:

> Translators are constrained in many ways: by their own ideology; by their feelings of superiority or inferiority towards the language in which they are writing the text being translated; by the prevailing poetical rules at that time; by the very language in which the texts they are translating is written; by what the dominant institutions and ideology expect of them; by the public for whom the translation is intended. The translation itself will depend upon all of these factors (Alvarez & Vidal, 1996, p. 6).

To fully understand the actions of the interpreters, then, we must admit that their position is a position of power; but that is not enough. We must study, in Alvarez and Vidal's terms, the constraints that dictate the interpreters' choices in using this power. Since any circumstance may become a constraint, we must not take the interpreters intentions and ethical choices for granted. It is an oversimplification to assume that they are in it just to "get the job done". We must move over from such straightforward explanations; they make life easier for theoreticians but don't necessarily reflect the real state of affairs in interpreting situations. It is convenient to assume, after Pym (2004), that translators and interpreters have a primary goal of ensuring cooperation between cultures, or, after Hsieh (2006, 2007), that the goal of medical interpreters is to provide the best possible medical care to the patient. While these may be the most important goals driving interpreters' decisions, we must examine their goals and ethics critically and keep our options open for multiple possibilities, regardless of whether they are compatible with the job descriptions and the professional codes of conduct.

A general discussion of personal involvement of translators and interpreters leaves us with two ideas. First, translation and interpretation can only be understood in

their historical, social, and political contexts, or which translators and interpreters themselves form an indispensable part. Second, given the power that translators and interpreters have, their roles and goals must be critically studied. I will now turn to interpreting studies literature to examine interpreters' roles in more detail.

Roles

Once again, there are at least three concepts in interpreting studies literature that relate to personal involvement: roles, agency, and visibility. The roles are the broadest concept and are a good starting point for a discussion of involvement. Roy (1993) provides one of the earliest summary of approaches to interpreter roles by examining the metaphors that describe the roles. There are some metaphors that portray the translator as a conduit – these include metaphors such as bridge, machine, window, and telephone line. On the face of it, the metaphor of the bridge is a good metaphor for the translator's work. It captures the essential quality – a translator is a link between two cultural worlds. However, the image it creates is passive and static. Translators are not just passive links; when the information is traveling across the "bridge" they can amplify or dampen it. In fact, if they want the interaction to go smoothly without conflict between the parties, they absolutely have to intervene to correct the faux pas that the parties invariably commit because of their limited familiarity with the other party's cultural norms (Gentzler, 1998). To describe these active roles, Roy (1993) uses labels such as *helpers, communication-facilitators,* and *bilingual / bicultural specialists.*

In a study of community interpreters in Sweden, Wadensjö (1998) found that they performed behaviors that fit both the passive and the active roles – she described the former as relaying and the latter as co-ordinating. Wadensjö's findings demonstrate that

interpreting is an interactive process in which the interpreter participates in co-constructing the meaning of the interaction just as much as the parties for who he or she is translating. They also show that viewing translation or interpreting as simply text transfer without considering the context is inadequate.

Agency

Roy's classification divides the gamut of role possibilities into separate pockets; Wadensjö's views shows that an interpreter can occupy two pockets at once. The literature in interpreting presents a third possibility – a continuum between the textual and contextual views, between passive and active roles.

The ends of the continuum can be labeled as visibility and invisibility. The term 'visibility' has been used in translation and interpreting studies most prominently by Venuti (1992) and Angelelli (2004). The two uses are different but related. Angelelli's ideas about visibility are essential for my study; but Venuti's thoughts are relevant as well. Angelelli's (2004) version is about self-effacement vs. active involvement of a translator in the translatorial act. Venutti's (1992) version is about the (lack of) acknowledgement of the profession of translation and the discipline of translation studies[27].

According to Venuti, "[t]ranslation continues to be an invisible practice, everywhere around us, inescapably present, but rarely acknowledged" (Venuti, 1992, p. 1). The translation is secondary to the original in that as the times change, it may be deemed necessary to produce a new translation of a literary work to make the translation "current". The original doesn't seem to be affected by age, while the translation may become outdated (Venuti, 1992).

Angelelli (2004) describes visibility as a continuum describing the roles of an interpreter from a passive information mover on one end to an active cultural mediator on the other end. The invisibility is prescribed by the professional codes of behavior (Angelelli, 2004). Traditional translator education dictates that the translator should be a cultural bridge, a conduit for other people's ideas. The personal values of the professionals are irrelevant; they must make an effort to not let them interfere with the translation process; moreover, they must *conceal* them. Sometimes the invisibility is not only figurative, but literal – the conference interpreter is put into a booth from where he can see the participants but is not seen by them; a community interpreter is present during the discussion, but is asked to step aside when the official photograph is taken.

The more the interpreters see their role as active, the more involved in the interaction they will get. Their involvement will consist in seeing themselves as a participant in the interpretive act rather than a passive bridge, and in using interventions to enact the participation. But Venuti's ideas help explain how the situation described by Angelelli came about. Seeing translation as a trade of information moving creates a distorted image of translators as passive conduits[28].

Angelelli's (2004) study shows that professional interpreters vary in their perceptions of their visibility. The older interpreters with traditional training tend to believe that a translator must be invisible; the younger interpreters see their role as a more active one. They see themselves as co-constructors of the discourse on par with the parties for which they are translating.

The literature on medical interpreting seeks to further nuance the understanding of the role continuum. Avery (2001) traced the development of the understanding of health

care interpreter roles. Early on, it was viewed as a dichotomy between the passive and active, or in Avery's terms, neutrality and advocacy. Later on, the understanding evolved to viewing it as a continuum, with four possible stances. At the extreme passive end is the conduit role. This is a notion inherited from the most formal interpreting contexts, such as legal and diplomatic settings. It consists in pure message transmission, in which the interpreter is completely invisible. Moving towards a more active stance, the next stage is that of a cultural and linguistic manager; at this stage the interpreter maintains the flow of communication, intervening to provide linguistic and cultural commentary. The most extreme active stance views the interpreter as embedded in the cultural and linguistic community. With this approach, the personal and professional lives of the interpreter are inseparable; there is no choice but to be involved.

The fourth option in Avery's classification is that of incremental involvement, which is about moving between the first three options, oscillating between a passive and an active stance depending on the demands on the interpreting situation, intervening when necessary. In her concluding remarks, Avery makes the idea of incremental intervention the basis of her summary of interpreter roles. Interpreters experience "creative tension" (Avery, 2001, p.14) between the two polarities of neutrality and advocacy. This paradoxical tension is necessary to make the interpreter's work both accurate and meaningful:

> Both polarities are critical. The conduit perspective keeps the field grounded in the central function of the interpreter – the linguistic conversion that allows communication between a patient and provider who do not speak the same language. The embeddedness perspective challenges the profession to

> consider its place in a holistic view of the patient's well-being – a wholeness of heart, mind, and spirit. One without the other is incomplete (p.14).

Avery's ideas are based on annual panel discussions with professional interpreters over the course of six years; her conclusions are supported in other studies on interpreter roles. In an extensive study of conference interpreting, Diriker (2004) found that a de-contextualized view is inapplicable even to simultaneous interpreting done in very formal, controlled situations. Her observations of interpreting situations and interviews with interpreters showed that interpreters often served as active communicative mediators rather than passive conduits. Diriker talks about "multiple speaker positions" (p. 148) available to the interpreter during the task of regulating and negotiating the interaction. Interpreters move between these options similar to Avery's incremental intervention.

Dysart-Gale (2007), reporting on a study based on observations of and interviews with medical interpreters, discusses the two polarities as the transmission model and the semiotic model. The transmission model of interpreting is equivalent to the conduit view; the semiotic one presupposes active negotiation of meaning by the interpreter and is close the embeddedness end of Avery's continuum. Similar to Avery (2001), Dysart-Gale concludes that both are imperative in the interpretive process.

Leanza (2005) proposes a four item classification of interpreter roles. The taxonomy is based on the view that the interpreter is assisting a patient, who is not only lacking linguistic skills, but often cultural and pragmatic knowledge of the health care system needed to interact with that very system. Most of the time interpreters act only as *linguistic agents* (still another name for conduits), but occasionally they take on a role of *system agents* – explaining the health care rules to the patient, or the reverse role of

community agents, explaining the values of the patient to the provider. Outside of the interpreting situation itself, interpreters perform a fourth role, that of *integration agents*, assisting patients in coping with a new unfamiliar way of life both inside and outside of the health care system. Leanza's classification is unique in its juxtaposition of the local system to a foreign individual and the attempts of the interpreter to reconcile the two. Its uniqueness limits its applicability in contexts outside of Western medical interpreting, where one vs. many position and the imbalance of power may not be the same.

Rosenberg, Seller, and Leanza (2008) provide a further fine-tuning of the role discussion by comparing professional and family interpreters in a medical setting. Predictably, they found that family interpreters naturally embedded in the situation and more willing to take active roles, assuming the part of the third participant in the interaction; professional interpreters were closer to the conduit end of the continuum.

Hsieh (2006, 2007, 2008; Hsieh & Kramer, in press) has published a series of research reports investigating interpreters' roles in a medical setting. She found that rather than take on the conduit role, interpreters actively managed provider-patient interactions, sometimes encroaching on the medical personnel duties and serving as co-diagnosticians (2006). She observed these behaviors not only within the interpreting situation itself, but in patient-interpreter interactions outside of it as well.

Investigating the issue further, Hsieh (2007) looked at how role expectations that originate from institutional rules or from participant perceptions often clash with the roles actually enacted by the interpreters. Her respondents felt that the expected conduit performance could have "problematic consequences" (p. 723) and that a more active stance was needed for a successful interaction. To resolve role conflicts, they would

employ sophisticated strategies to redefine parts of the interpreting situation. For example, they would limit the scope of their formal assignment to the interpreting act itself. While they would adopt a conduit role during the act, they then freely assumed an advocate role in their interactions with the patients outside of it. Hsieh (2007) attempted to derive a classification of interpreter roles from in-depth interviews with interpreters and found that their understanding differed significantly from academic classifications.

Hsieh and Kramer (in press) put forth a thesis that furthers the findings of Hsieh's previous studies: all three parties are interdependent on each other in the interpreting act. Together they construct the meaning of the encounter. This interdependence means that none of the parties have an independent voice, and that role conflicts emerging from the differences of expectations between the three parties cannot be ignored but must be actively resolved and negotiated.

Overall, the literature on interpreting studies suggests that the issue of being active or passive, whether its treated under the label of roles, agency, visibility, or voice, is a highly complex one, dynamically negotiated by the participants in each interpreting encounter. Different approaches reviewed above offer diverging perspective to the issue. Each of these approaches could become the theoretical foundation for my study of personal involvement.

I will use Angelelli's notion and definition of invisibility, for two reasons. First, all the approaches reviewed are based on a fundamental polarity between the passive and the active role, and the visibility / invisibility continuum provides the most vivid metaphor for expressing this polarity. Second, based on my own experience with translator / interpreter education in Russian universities, this is also the most popular and

familiar metaphor in that environment. It would be useful to compare academic definitions of invisibility (and through that, the understanding of interpreters' roles) and the professionals' perceptions of the same concept.

Visibility and power

As the above review of visibility and power demonstrates, interpreters and translators are in a position of power. Therefore, it is necessary to study the mechanisms of how this power resource in enacted. The interpreter will have and use this resource whether or not they intend to do so; however, it is important to know what their own perceptions of their roles might be if we want to understand the workings of this power better. The translational situation will develop depending on the active / passive (visible / invisible) perception of the role, with all the nuanced possibilities in between the two points of the continuum.

The idiosyncrasy of interpretation is the key to the position I take here. Translators wield their power from the ability to interpret the symbolic actions that unravel in front of them. In the process of interpretation, they produce a unique, idiosyncratic reading of the text that is inseparable from their experience, knowledge, and values. They have power because consciously or unconsciously, they produce a new reading of the text that is not equivalent to the original. Their power comes from the ability to modify the original by interpreting it in a way that comes from their unique experience.

If the professional sees his role as passive, than the ego-involvement in his professional life would be minimal: if he sees his role as a cultural bridge, he will perceive himself as having little control over the situation, and therefore little

responsibility for the results of his actions. The passive role fits the ideal of invisibility and noninvolvement, thus not requiring intervention even when the professional is working with individuals who have cultural values different from his own. However, if the professional sees himself as active, he is likely to be personally involved in the interaction. Any discrepancy in values will result in internal struggles, and a greater need for intervention. Moreover, since the active role presupposes that interventions are acceptable, they will not be seen as violations of the professional code, and they will not be inhibited as much as they are by the professionals who see their role as passive.

Based on the review of issues related to personal involvement, three aspects stand out:

1) *Community interpreters will perceive their roles as active or passive, resulting in high or low levels of personal involvement.*

This is the issue of Angelelli's (2004) visibility. What metaphor for translation activity does the interpreter prefer? Do they describe themselves as linguistic conduits or as culture brokers?

2) *Community interpreters will vary in the amount and kinds of interventions that they enact.*

Given the stance on visibility, how does the interpreter deal with interventions, i.e. instances when his or her actions are not limited to the passive role prescribed by the professional codes of conduct and when they have to actively get involved in the interaction? What kinds of interventions are most common in their practice?

3) *The interventions performed by community interpreters will have an impact on the parties involved in the interpretive act.*

Through interventions, the interpreter participates in the communicative act of interpretation and changes the situation beyond the intentions of the two parties for whom he or she is interpreting. This may be a negligible influence (such as the interpreter translating harsh words in less inflammatory language to avoid conflict) or a huge one (such as a deliberate mistranslation benefiting one party and robbing the other). How do interpreters perceive the consequences of their interventions?

These issues from the discussion of personal involvement can be combined with the four issues from an earlier review of cultural identity to provide a range of possible questions for the study of the two phenomena together. In the next chapter, I will present a plan for such a study – describing its methodology and its participants.

Chapter 4: Methods

> The role of the intellectual is not to ordain, to recommend solutions, to prophesy, because in that function he can only contribute to the functioning of a particular power situation that, in my opinion, must be criticized.
>
> Michel Foucault[29]

Participants: Sampling

The data for my study came from thirty in-depth interviews with working interpreters in Russia and Canada. The interviews were conducted over the course of two and a half months during Fall 2007. Along the way, I transcribed the interviews already conducted, never lagging more than five or six interviews behind, and usually maintaining just a two or three interview backlog. This allowed me to analyze the data along the way and make the necessary changes to the list of interview questions and to complete the entire data collection and transcribing in three months.

I used snowball sampling to find the participants, beginning with my personal contacts among interpreters. I simultaneously approached about twenty people (most of them over e-mail) and asked them if they would be willing to participate in the study or if they could recommend other people who might. I targeted interpreters in Russia, Canada, Poland, Italy, and Belgium. To my surprise, none of the contacts in Poland, Italy or

Belgium bore any fruit. Only one success came from Canada. The remaining twenty nine came from Russia.

Several factors have probably contributed to my success in Russia and my failure elsewhere. First, my Russian network started with two personal contacts who are my close friends. They were really committed to helping me and were instrumental in providing contacts for further interviews. One of them provided three effective contacts; the other provided six, five out of which resulted in successful interviews. Their goodwill traveled down the chain to the next generations of contacts. Several times when approaching a new contact I would hear that the fact that I was referred to them by their friend was sufficient proof that the interview was worth doing.

Apart from the friend factor described above, another reason for success was my "Russianness". I was able to approach interpreters in an appropriate way and present my requests with maximum politeness and respect. It also helped that the first thirteen participants were females and I was able to add frivolousness to my arsenal of persuasive tools[30].

Many of the participants were flattered to hear that someone took genuine interest in their work. I believe they were particularly pleased that the request for interviews came from a compatriot living in the U.S. Russians generally have very favorable opinion of foreigners, especially if the come from the developed world. As someone who has lived abroad for over seven years, I must have caught some of the foreigner halo that made me appear as a higher status individual. Several respondents even felt that participating in the study and indirectly learning about the opinions common in the profession helped create a sense of community in an industry where individual workers are usually disconnected.

For the interview candidates in Italy, Belgium, Poland, and Canada, I must have appeared more foreign, less polite, and lower in status. I make this claim based on my initial contacts with approximately a dozen interpreters in these locations and the impressions from the brief exchanges I have had with them. Because of incessant solicitations from marketers, the people in "developed" countries have lower tolerance for surveys and interviews. They are much more wary of the legal implications of sharing their opinions with researchers, and are careful to protect their privacy and identity from possible intrusions.

Finally, almost all successful initial contacts were obtained by phone. I usually asked the participants to refer me to some new contacts, and if possible, warn them that I would be contacting them. The participants would get in touch with their friends, obtain the initial confirmation that they might be able to participate, and then give me their phone contact information. I would then call them at the time they requested, give them a short description of the study, and schedule a day and time for the actual interview. Had I used e-mail exclusively as a mode of communication with participants, I would no doubt have far less success in finding respondents.

Geographically, all thirty interviews came from only four locations. One participant was from Montréal, Canada; eleven came from Moscow, Russia fifteen from Saint Petersburg, Russia and three from a large city in Central Russia. They came from three initial contacts (Montréal, Moscow, and St. Petersburg). These three contacts started a chain reaction stretching four or five (and in one case even six) generations (the full map of all contacts is presented in Figure 1). Most of the interviews, then, were conducted with people who I had not met prior to the interview, and since the interviews

were conducted over the phone, people with whom I am still not "acquainted" even now in a traditional understanding of the word.

Participants: Respondent profile

Thirty working interpreters participated in the study. Below I present a demographic profile of a typical participant.

There were twenty four females and six males. Anecdotal evidence suggests that such a lopsided split is representative of the Russian interpreting industry as a whole. Two thirds of the respondents were in their late 20s or 30s. The median age was 31 years (with a mean of 33.5 years). Only four respondents were in their mid 20s (the youngest respondent was 23). Six respondents were over 40 (the oldest respondent was 54).

Despite the fact that the interviewees were relatively young and were interviewed in the beginning or the mid point of their careers, almost all of them had extensive work experience as interpreters and translators. Only three respondents reported having less than five years of experience, with a median of 10 years and an arithmetic mean of 11.97 years. Six interpreters had over 20 years of experience, with the most accomplished person reporting an impressive 36 years on the job.

Their experience covered the whole spectrum of translation and interpreting services. First of all, interpretation was either their main job or a side job; the two groups were approximately equal. Some of the interpreters that did the work on the side did not consider themselves professional interpreters – even if their main job was teaching foreign language or teaching interpretation itself at the university level. In all such cases, the main job was somehow language related and served as a credential confirming their linguistic proficiency:

> I wouldn't call it my number one job in the first place because I teach English mostly, but it is my second thing I do (7)

Second, they were either freelancers or had steady employment through a translation division in a large or small company or government agency. Most respondents have worked as freelancers at least at some point in their career, receiving work orders from translation agencies or from a network of personal contacts. Even if they had a steady job they often supplemented it with chance freelance assignments or written translations. Having a backlog of written translation orders was a way to ensure a steady source of income between the more lucrative interpreting assignments that were not always readily available (for freelancers) or a way to escape office drudgery when no work was in sight (for employed interpreters). Doing written work also allowed a welcome relaxation from the thrilling but overly stressful life of an interpreter:

> I find [oral interpretation] more exciting, I just like it more but I don't mind doing written work for a change because sometimes everybody needs to calm down and sit quietly which oral translation work doesn't allow (6)

Also, some assignments required a combination of written and oral work and involved translation of project documentation before face-to-face meetings between parties occurred.

Steadily employed interpreters were often affiliated with large companies – such as one of the largest banks, a giant automotive firm, or a stock exchange – or less commonly by smaller companies, where they sometimes had to combine interpreting assignments with secretarial duties.

All tiers of the profession were represented, from tour guides to consecutive business interpreters to UN-trained simultaneous interpreters with country-leader level experience:

> My recent projects include participating in the second Russian American international energy summit in 2003 in St. Petersburg, G8 summit in St. Petersburg in 2006, J8 in 2006 – then economic forum in St. Petersburg in 2007 – so on and so forth – so I think the experience is pretty vast (15)

Not surprisingly, the remuneration was commensurate with the level of spontaneity in the work. Scripted consecutive interpreting (routine tour and excursions, for example), commanded the least pay and held the least respect; less predictable situations such as business meetings were better paid; and demanding simultaneous projects provided the best rewards. As one of the respondents put it, "the more stress, the more you get paid" (13).

This hierarchy was similar to the trajectory of professional growth for many interpreters – starting with written translation, than continuing with consecutive interpreting, and finally culminating in simultaneous interpreting. Many interpreters started this journey working part time while still finishing their university education. Staying at the lower rungs of the pay ladder became particularly unattractive in recent years because the rates for written translations took a nose dive with the advent of the Internet and computer aided translation (and an open online market that appeared thanks to that).

Few interpreters specialized in a particular branch of industry. Two mentioned working specifically in the legal field, but most took whatever assignment was available

and cited the breadth of exposure to different strata of society as one of the benefits of the job. A similar lack of exclusivity was notable regarding oral or written work. Perhaps part of the reason for such omnivorous habits is the lack of distinct lines in the Russian language industry between oral interpreters and written translators (incidentally, in Russian both professions are described with the same word, *переводчик*) as well as an almost complete absence of regulations and strict protocols (in comparison to the heavily regulated and legislatively burdened American service industry).

A typical respondent, then, was a middle aged professional with university level education related to linguistics (I will say more on that later), who did both written and oral work and often combined steady employment with chance or constant freelance assignments. For the purposes of this study – or indeed any study of interpretation – it is necessary to study their linguistic skills in more detail and describe how they obtained them, how they maintained their proficiency, and how they evaluated their knowledge.

Procedure: Methodology

The goal of the study is to explore the connection (presented in Chapter 1 between cultural identity (reviewed in Chapter 2) and personal involvement (reviewed in Chapter 3). The method of the study is in-depth interviews with active community interpreters. The scope of the interview is limited by the range of issues that were identified as critical in the second and third chapters. Based on these issues, the following research questions were developed:

1) What is the difference in cultural identity between monolingual and bilingual people?

2) How is cultural identity related to the membership in one or several speech communities?

3) Do values from different speech communities that form part of an interpreter's cultural identity come in conflict with each other?

4) What is the relationship between community interpreters' cultural identity and personal involvement, on the one hand, and the levels of the interpreters' linguistic and cultural competence for the speech communities that they work with, on the other hand?

5) Do the interpreters perceive their roles as active or passive, personally involved or not?

6) What kinds of interventions do the interpreters perform?

7) What impact do the interventions performed by community interpreters have on the parties involved in the interpretive act?

Basic demographic information about the respondents also had to be gathered. This included questions about their age, educational background, and professional experience.

To gather demographic data and to find answers for my research questions, I have used qualitative interviews and textual analysis. The interviews were in-depth, open-ended, and participant-driven. The interviews were in-depth in that I did not proceed to the next topic until adequate answers were gathered on the current question. That meant that the length of time spent on each question differed from participant to participant.

The interviews were also open-ended: if the participant introduced a new topic that was relevant to the discussion but that was not part of the original theoretical

framework, it was discussed using follow-up questions. In this respect, they were similar to the open interviews that flow like friendly conversation advocated by Spradley (1979).

Thanks to this openness, the interviews were participant-driven: the weight of importance accorded to each topic by the participant guided the amount of time spent on it in the interview. The participants dictated the flow of the researcher-participant interaction not only within the interview, but between interviews: feedback from previous interviews was immediately incorporated into future interviews. As a result, the study proceeded using a funnel design (Lindlof, 1995) – its focus shifted as the original theoretical framework was modified using the already gathered data.

The goal of qualitative interviews is the understanding of the lived experience of a particular group of people, or rather of the meaning that the people ascribe to the experience (Van Manen, 1990). The interviewing allows the researchers to understand the respondents' behavior embedded in the social context in which it happens (Seidman, 2006). There is a long history of using qualitative interviews in both communication (Rogers, 1994) and translation studies (Wadensjö, 2001), as well as in social sciences in general; and a vast literature describing the strengths and weaknesses of this method.

The vastness of the literature also means that there are different approaches to interviewing that can be classified as a continuum from open to closed, unstructured to unstructured, participant-driven to researcher-driven. On the one extreme, you have Spradley's (1979) friendly conversations; the other extreme is simply a quantitative questionnaire delivered to the respondent orally, with the "interviewer" checking the appropriate boxes on the answer sheet. My interviews were closer to the open end of the continuum; this is consistent with the recent shift in the research community. In the last

two decades, the generally accepted understanding of the interview has shifted from a researcher gathering data from the respondent to the interaction between the two, acknowledging the active role of the participants (Kvale, 1996). In Holstein's and Gubrium's (1995) words, "both parties to the interview are necessarily and unavoidably active" (p. 4).

Giving more control to the participants is advantageous because it creates 'thick descriptions' of social life (Gaskell, 2000), but it is also risky because the researcher has fewer ways to ensure consistency and rigor in how the data are gathered and analyzed. The subjective nature of qualitative interviews is generally believed to be their main disadvantage. To compensate for these increased risks, there has also been a tendency to refine and improve the interviewing procedures to make them more rigorous (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003).

One way to establish if a qualitative study is sound is to apply the criteria of validity and reliability employed by the quantitative method. One could argue that while it is easier to achieve reliability (consistent accurate measurement) with the quantitative method, qualitative studies have more validity (meaningfulness and situatedness) (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003). The argument is based on a view that the two methods, the quantitative and qualitative, are so vastly different that validity and reliability must be treated differently in the two approaches. Some researchers would even claim that the differences are so great that the terms validity and reliability must be limited to the quantitative method and substituted with a new vocabulary (such as 'integrity') in qualitative studies (Schram, 2006).

Quantitative studies differ in the level of reliability and validity they achieve; no study is perfectly accurate. The same applies to qualitative interviews. In Jansen and Peshkin's (1992) words, "[t]he inescapable fact of our presence in research means that we are present to make choices… [c]hoices equal subjectivity at work" (p. 721). The difference is that in qualitative research the role and the involvement of the researcher is not diminished, but celebrated:

> Rather than decrying the fact that the instrument used to gather data affects this process, we say the human interviewer can be a marvelously smart, adaptable, flexible instrument who can respond to situations with skill, tact, and understanding (Seidman, 2006, p. 23).

If we are to trust the data produced by a qualitative interviewer, he or she must follow several rules. First, during data gathering and analysis the researcher has to work with a clearly defined set of principles such as guarding against forcing data into preconceived categories (Glaser, 1978), or keeping labels and categories tentative and coming back to the same data multiple times (Siedman, 2006). The advocates of the grounded theory approach (which is perhaps the most compelling effort so far to codify the qualitative interview process) list several critical skills for a good interviewer, such as "the ability to step back and critically analyze situations", "the ability to recognize the tendency towards bias" or "the ability to be flexible and open to helpful criticism" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 7).

Second, the researcher must meticulously document the strategies of data gathering and analysis in the final report so that the reader could at least approximately reconstruct the context of the research and situate the data in it. To assist the reader

further, the researcher should also provide extensive quotations from the participants' statements – again allowing for a re-interpretation or alternative explanations of the data. Any analysis is inevitably reductionist, simplifying a more complex symbolic code into a simpler one, inevitably accompanied by a data loss (Boulding, 1975). Providing raw data to the reader – even if it is only a limited selection done by the researcher – creates a possibility for validating the researcher's interpretations, as well as opportunities for the readers to do their own sensemaking. In this sense, the reader, along with the researcher and the participant, becomes the third persona (Wander, 1984) in this process, as important as the other two parties.

In my analysis, I have followed a similar protocol – a critical, flexible stance during the research process, a detailed description of the steps taken during data collection and analysis in this report, and an extensive compendium of participants' quotations incorporated into the analysis to support my interpretations.

Procedure: Technical details

Conducting interviews over the phone was a necessary evil because of time and cost constraints. Scheduling and actually conducting thirty one hour long face-to-face appointments with busy professionals in several different countries is a formidable task that could not be accomplished cheaply or quickly. Conducting and recording them over the phone using IP telephony was an attractive alternative. Phone interviews have their advantages and disadvantages; my experience was similar to that previously reported in the literature on qualitative interpreting (Shuy, 2003).

There were several advantages to doing the interviews this way. First, the respondent could be anywhere he or she pleased during the interview – as long as a land

phone line or a cellular phone was available. One interview was conducted while the respondent was stuck in a traffic jam driving home from work at the end of the day. Moreover, neither the respondents nor the interviewer had to be preoccupied with their physical appearance during the conversation. Because of the time difference, the majority of the interviews were conducted early in the morning or late at night for me (and during the day and evening for the respondents).[31] Many times, by the hour of the interview I was still (or already) in pajamas and slippers, relaxed at my desk with a cup of piping hot tea. I suspect many of my respondents similarly took advantage of not needing to perform front stage behaviors.

The relaxed atmosphere made the respondents more genuine and open. Even though they were always warned that the interview would be recorded and agreed to be recorded, they didn't have the physical recorder in front of their face, and after a few minutes of initial awkwardness seemed quite oblivious of the fact that they were recorded at all.

The relaxed atmosphere also allowed me to focus entirely on the interview and actually listen to the respondent rather than be distracted by other cues. Since they couldn't see me, sometimes when I asked a question that I believed might be unpleasant for the respondent and I felt uneasy asking it, I would make a face or clasp my hands to relieve tension and continue to focus on the interview.

Technically, the interviews were conducted using voice over the internet protocol (VOIP) telephony. I placed calls to fixed and cellular phone lines using Skype, a VOIP software package. I used a headset with headphones and a microphone as a receiver. The interviews were recorded by capturing audio from the calls placed with Skype. I used a

commercial audio capture application, Audio Hijack Pro, to record the interviews in a compressed audio format (MPEG-4, H.264 codec, mono sound, 128 kilobits per second per channel). I then used Apple QuickTime to re-play the recording and transcribe the interviews. The whole interview process was completed using a notebook computer with a headset. No additional hardware (other than an external hard drive for data backup) was needed. Instead of using expensive dedicated recording and transcribing hardware, I completed the same tasks at a fraction of the budget needed for a dedicated solution using software tools with similar functionality.

The weakest link in my workflow was Skype. The quality of the phone call depended on the quality of the Internet connection at any given moment, the load on the Skype servers, and the availability of phone lines to the needed destination. These three factors fluctuated significantly within a given day, and sometimes varied significantly even within an hour. Since most calls were close to one hour in duration, I often had to deal with substandard audio quality at some point during the interview. I always warned the respondents that sound quality issues could arise during the interview and asked them to alert me should they experience any problems. If either of us was not happy with the quality, most of time just redialing the number would help to improve the quality. In other cases it took trying a different number (for example, a landline instead of a cell phone) or calling at a later time to resolve the issue. Overall, even though the process wasn't perfectly smooth, the results were comparable to or better than microcassette recording that I have used in previous studies and were definitely adequate. In the majority of interviews, I could transcribe the entire conversation without missing a single word or needing to replay any segment of the interview.

Procedure: A statistical profile of a typical interview

Before describing the findings from the interviews, I would like to profile the interviews themselves. This is possible thanks to the analysis of interview transcripts. Once the data was available in electronic format, it could be analyzed statistically[32]. It also opened the doors for corpus-style analysis that I will present later. These two quantitative methods, descriptive statistics and computational linguistics (in my case, mostly concordancing) can alert the qualitative researcher to patterns and irregularities in the studied text and help locate the points of interest for the main qualitative analysis.

In my case, the transcripts amounted to a massive collection of text – 145,000 words, or 700,000 characters, more than twice the length of a modern novel and just shy of Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*.[33] To facilitate the analysis, I tagged the transcripts so that search text element could be linked to the interview code number and so that my speech was differentiated from the respondent's speech.

The interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes on average; the longest interview lasted 50 minutes, and the shortest was 28 minutes. In all cases, the actual contact with the respondent was at least 10-15 minutes longer, with a brief conversation before the recorded part of the interview and usually a longer conversation following the interview.

The interviews range in length from 3,000 to 7,000 words, with an average interview being about 5,000 words. This translates into an average rate of speech of 120 words per minute (and a range from 98 to 136 words per minute). Predictably, the rate of speech in the interviews is slow (with even the fastest paced interview still falling into the slow speech category). The interviews are conducted in the interviewees' non-native

language; respondents attempt to give thoughtful and precise answers, so there are longer and more frequent pauses than there would be in a less scripted conversation.

Chronologically, the longest interviews cluster around the point one third through the data collection. Shorter interviews occur in the beginning where I am testing my original set of interview questions. As I get feedback from respondents, the scope of discussions widens to accommodate the new topics referred to by the first interviewees; the length of the interview peaks around the tenth interview and the slowly starts to decline until the last interviews are similar in length to the first interviews. This decline reflects data saturation – after the first ten interviews, few new topics are introduced, and the length of the interview begins to shrink as I find more efficient ways to address the topics discussed.

Such an explanation is further supported by the distribution of my talk share. On average, I produce a third of the narrative, with the respondent supplying the remaining two thirds. In the thirty interviews, my share fluctuates between a modest 20% of talk and an embarrassingly high 48%[34]. But again chronologically the numbers show the same trend as the overall interview word count: I speak little in the opening interviews, then more and more one third of the way into the process, and then my share begins to decline to reach original levels by the end of data collection. Both the word count trend and my talk share percentage reflect the same reality – my initial confidence with the original scope of research, then confusion and rearrangement caused by interviewees' input, and slow sensemaking reducing the confusion and streamlining the process later on.

Finally, comparing the two interviews conducted in Russian to the remaining English interviews, the Russian interviews predictably have a higher character count,

even though they have a similar word count. This is to be expected since the average word length in Russian is greater that in English.

Procedure: The scope of the interview

The list of questions used in the interviews is presented in the Appendix A. The follow-up questions for the questions presented in the list were continuously revised based on the participant feedback. The sequence of questions in the real interview closely followed the list, unless the respondent brought up a topic that was to be discussed later, in which case I usually seized the opportunity to treat it on the spot. Early on I was particularly careful to establish trust with the respondent and persuade him or her that I would be circumspect and courteous with my questions. The first question about age was usually accompanied by me saying that this was most likely going to be the most intrusive question in the entire interview; while this statement may not have been correct in a 100% of cases (some respondents were very forthcoming in their answers and revealed very personal information during the interview), it certainly reflected my intentions very accurately.

In two cases, when I was interviewing people who have had lapses in their interpreting careers and who felt like their language skills were inadequate I made a point of avoiding asking for clarifications in the beginning of the interview to give the impression that they were perfectly intelligible, even if that was not exactly the case. I also skipped the discussion of linguistic competence so as not to appear questioning their professional abilities.

Before describing the actual content of the interviews, it is also worth noting how the interviewees responded to my request for procedural feedback at the end of the

interview. Overall the response from the interviewees was very favorable - several of them praised me for conducting the study with "real people" (6) rather than relying on archival data. They generally found the interview well-planned and the coverage of topics rather comprehensive. They told me I asked "good and cunning… deep questions" (5), and that I was a pleasure to deal with (the impression was certainly mutual in most cases). Some of them said it didn't even feel like an interview, or like an interrogation: it was a "conversation", a "discussion of matters related to translation and interpretation with a man who understands" (24). Not surprisingly, it was not uncommon for the respondents to reverse the roles (as you would do in an informal conversation) and start asking me questions in the middle of the interview. At first I was taken aback by such behavior (never having encountered it in my previous studies with U.S. based participants) but quickly learned to enjoy it.

The only times I received negative feedback was when people expressed concerns about my method. They questioned the validity of a sample of thirty people; but when I told them that I wasn't going to claim that my findings apply to all interpreters – or even all Russian interpreters, they became less skeptical. Even though one of them still expressed doubts about the usefulness of such "soft" data and lamented the fact that she could only give me "opinion" and not "facts" (3), most were happy with the interview itself and the methods employed by it.

Procedure: Textual analysis

My data analysis strategy was similar to the one advocated by the literature – I studied the transcripts with “an openness, a willingness to listen and to give voice to respondents” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 43). I approached the interview data in

fundamentally the same way I would approach any other text (Seidman, 2006), accompanying a careful reading by judgment (Mostyn, 1985). There were multiple readings; and in between readings I stayed focused on the task of making sense of the data, living with the text (Seidman, 2006), striving for ”a sense of absorption and devotion to the work process” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 7).

Throughout the study, I kept field notes about the process. These field notes included not only procedural ideas (e.g. thoughts on the best order of questions), but mostly consisted of theoretical ideas about the interrelationships between different concepts and ideas, attempts at classifications, and early explanations and tentative answers to research questions.

Using the field notes, I have started thematically organizing the transcripts. The first step was to put together the answers to the same question from different respondents. Then, after several readings, I started to group similar responses into clusters and labeling the clusters with descriptive names. It is at this stage that I used concordancers to make sure that I have included all data relevant to a given cluster, from every interview. The analysis proceeded by re-arranging existing clusters into more satisfactory ones, and by connecting different clusters into larger units. This is consistent with the recommendations in the literature on interviewing to “keep the labels tentative” (Seidman, 2006, p. 126) and to keep re-arranging and re-labeling the categories until the very last stage in the analysis (Charmaz, 2003).

After several iterations, all the clusters have become part of a larger theme; in some cases the same snippet of interview data was relevant to more than one theme. The resulting classification did not entirely mirror the structure of the research questions.

Some elements predicted by the theoretical platform were missing in the findings; other unforeseen elements have emerged. In presenting my findings in the next chapter, I have to reconcile this paradox, and to present the results in the order suggested by the research questions, for the sake of the reader; but for the sake of data integrity, I will have to deviate from the original order to present the themes in the form and order that is consistent with my specific findings.

The resulting analysis is an idiosyncratic narrative produced by me and situated in the time and the context of its writing. Were I to undertake the analysis again at a later time, it would have undoubtedly produced different results because the time and the context would have changed; not only would my knowledge of the context of my research evolve, but the temporal distance from the interviews itself would have lead me to forget and overlook some themes, while suddenly discovering others based on my new experience. In a similar fashion, member-checking (i.e. letting the participants review my findings) would not necessarily validate or invalidate my analysis (Seidman, 2006) because again it would occur at a different time and space than the original interviews. To compensate for this idiosyncracy, I have attempted to provide enough of an "audit trail" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) in this report for the reader to understand my sensemaking process, as well as snippets of the original interviews so that the reader could produce their own unique interpretation of the texts.

Procedure: A corpus analysis

Statistical and corpus methods were auxiliary tools to the main method of analyzing the interview data. Computational linguistics became feasible with the arrival of computer hardware capable of storing and processing large amounts of textual data. As

the capacity of these systems increases, it becomes possible to amass a collection of texts so vast that it can be representative of a given language, register, or field. Such a representative collection is commonly referred to as a linguistic corpus (Leech, 2005; Sinclair, 2005a, 2005b). Studying a corpus compiled of language A texts collected at time B can provide a fairly accurate understanding of the functioning of that language at that time.

The current popularity of corpus linguistics is due in part to the success of a vast corpus of English, the 100-million word British National Corpus (BNC). A collaborative effort of several major publishing houses and government agencies, BNC has proven to be an indispensable tool for English lexicographers (Wynne, 2005), providing invaluable frequency and usage data for modern English.

One of the key techniques of corpus analysis is concordancing, that consists in logging all the instances of a given word in the corpus and the corresponding points in the text where the instances occur. This allows to count frequencies of word usage and therefore single out the most commonly used words; compare relative frequencies of words (for instance discover whether "translator" or "interpreter" is used more often in the corpus), or discover most common collocates for the word (we may find, for example, that the word "translator" is commonly preceded by the word "experienced" and followed by prepositions "into" and "from"). Moreover, in a large corpus like BNC a researcher can analyze usage trends by comparing word frequencies and collocates in different registers – and discover, for example, that the verb "differ", while a fairly common word in English (18.06 instances per million words), occurs 32 times more frequently in

academic writing than in fiction writing (52.76 vs 1.61), stemming perhaps from the scholar's obsession with comparing and contrasting things.

Linguistic corpora have been successfully used in translation studies – for example, to provide data for bilingual parallel comparisons between a text and several of its translations (Baker, 2004). There is a continued interest in corpus research methods in both translation (Tymoczko, 1998) and interpreting studies (Shlesinger, 1998).

In my case, it would be correct to say that I am borrowing the tools of corpus linguistics (namely concordancing and its ramifications) rather than simply doing corpus linguistics – since my collection of texts is very small by corpus standards and more importantly it is not representative of a particular language or register. Throughout the study, I have used it to locate the needed excerpts and decide if their occurrence was frequent enough to warrant a generalization.

Chapter 5: Results

Avec un porte-plume, c'est facile de faire
des multiplications et des lapins.

Marcel Pagnol[35]

Competence: Education

Two of my research questions deal with linguistic and cultural competence. One is about the differences in cultural identity between interpreters who grew up monolingual and those who were bilingual. The other is about needing a high level of linguistic and cultural competence needed to achieve identification with a given speech community. It is therefore necessary to review the participants' linguistic history, both during the formative years and during professional education.

Since all participants except for one were Russian, I must start this section by briefly describing Russian language instruction traditions. In Soviet and now in Russian secondary schools every child is required to take foreign language classes starting in the fourth grade (when the pupil is ten or eleven years old) and continuing with the classes until the tenth grade. There are specialized schools where pupils start a foreign language in the second grade and have intense language training throughout their school experience. As a result, regular school graduates have a basic command of a foreign language, while students from specialized schools achieve an adequate level of fluency.

About a third of the respondents went to specialized schools. By the time they graduated, they were proficient enough to pass entrance exams in the best linguistic universities, to win language competitions, to participate in foreign exchange programs, or even to find immediate employment. Some of the graduates of regular schools were

lucky to get motivated professors who inspired them with their example. Others achieved good fluency in English through hard work. Some of them won competitions or became the best in their class, which in turn encouraged them to devote their education and career to language. Most went on to get a university level degree – most likely studying philology, linguistics, language education, translation or interpreting theory. After five years of university education, they received a diploma equivalent to a bachelor's degree in the West. Most started working after that; a minority of them that wanted to teach English or translation continued with postgraduate education and at the time of the interview combined teaching and interpreting. The following quote sums the experience of a typical respondent very accurately:

> My specialization was English language but our department was preparing teachers of English. Of course we had courses of translation, but mainly literary translation and written translation, we didn't have any formal education in interpreting, but my qualification which is written down in the diploma, whatever, document that we receive after graduation, it says that I am an interpreter, a linguist, and a teacher of English (3).

Thanks to systematic linguistic education, most interpreters had a deep structural understanding of the language they worked with, and a theoretical background in grammar, syntax and stylistics. Not surprisingly, the three people in the sample who learned the language in a less systematic way (evening classes, experience, vocational colleges) possessed the worst command of it.

Competence: Certification

An issue related to education is certification; it was brought up as a relevant issue in the 20th interview. Its benefits and shortcoming became a point of discussion in subsequent interviews. Some saw it as an answer to the crisis of translator education, where diplomas don't mean very much. Most agreed that at the present moment certification is not at all widespread and is nearly pointless:

> … among our interpreters, including all the groups which we have – so it is about 60 people – I know just one person who has such certification and it was his own initiative and he did it, I am not sure that it helps him a lot, but at least he has it and I never tried … maybe because I never had a problem to find the job (29).

Several respondents, while supporting the idea in theory, were skeptical about its possible implementations by the Russian bureaucrats. They feared that the proposed solutions may create financial and logistical difficulties for interpreters. Others claimed that certification could give an interpreter more weight on the international market, which could in turn translate into better pay. Finally, one interpreter noted that the only kind of certification that she would welcome was corporate certification for a widespread translation memory software, Trados. In sum, most respondents believed that certification was redundant because in most cases personal references and university diplomas served the same function of establishing professional credibility.

Competence: Pragmatic skills and foreign experience

Some of them felt, however, that they were lacking practical skills because their education was formal and driven by the study of written texts rather than spoken language; based on my impressions from the interviews themselves, I can confirm that

while the respondents possessed a wide vocabulary and flawless grammar (in that way possibly exceeding the abilities of an average native speaker), they often made pronunciation errors, had unusual intonation patterns, lacked a wide knowledge of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, or imposed Russian syntax on English expressions – for example, they would use structures like "explain somebody something" instead of "explain something to somebody" (following Russian syntax), or as in the example below, attempt to translate a Russian idiomatic expression word for word (реализовать себя, самореализация – literally "realize themselves", meaning "express themselves, achieve one's potential"):

> *...everybody needs to – I don't know to – realize their – something they have inside, I don't know. – [KT] Express themselves? - Yeah, express themselves, exactly (6)*

While these flaws were common, they certainly weren't severe enough to complicate understanding; the overwhelming majority of the respondents (excluding the three people mentioned above who didn't have language-related university education) were proficient in English, with fluency approaching, and in some aspects exceeding, that of the native speakers.

The issue of fluency – and especially the respondents' perception of it – is an important aspect that will be considered at length later here; for now let me follow up on the language education topic and discuss the experiences that helped the respondents achieve near-native commuinicative competence – working and studying abroad.

About a third of the respondents have had an opportunity to study abroad in the UK or the US during the later years of their university studies or immediately after

graduation. A few of them also had a chance to work abroad for foreign companies. The experience of complete immersion has given them what library and lab work couldn't provide:

> … in any language there are some phrases or some sorts of formulas that exist and that are used very strongly in that language but not in any other and then when you translate them and they look kind of awkward and you feel that it is something wrong and people understand you but still it is not as natural (23)

An interpreter who studied for half a year in Germany told me that after his sojourn he no longer wondered how to translate idioms into German to say it "like the Germans would say it" – he simply knew it without deliberation. Another respondent mentioned that her stay in the United States has made it easy for her to deal with various accents. In general, it seems that the experience of studying abroad has given the interpreters the ability to sound native, as well as to have no difficulty comprehending native speech.

Competence: Working languages

The interpreters with a university level degree in linguistics usually learned two languages, but kept up their first language and hardly worked with the second one. The first one is typically English, the second German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, or in unique cases, Norwegian, Chinese, Tibetan, Danish, or Arabic. In my sample of 30 interpreters, I had two for whom the main language was German, and the second language was English.

Regardless of what their first working language was, most of them were similar in terms of how they used their second language. Many of them attempted to work with it immediately after graduation but over time were forced to focus on one language. They

slowly forgot the other language, and often felt that it could no longer be used for paid interpreting work, but only for written projects, or if the knowledge has deteriorated even further, it was fit "only for social conversation" (3) and not for work.

Competence: Professionalism

Many interpreters likened their trade to music performance in that it required constant practice to keep up the skills, as well as a passion for the work and dedication to it. Interpreting is hard regular work, and the end of formal education is by no means the end of a learning process that should last as long as the interpreter's career:

> …it is constant work, it's studying all the time – it is like music, it's practicing daily (1).
>
> …one should keep reading and listening and talking – it should be nonstop, the education should never stop in this field (5).
>
> I would say that beginning interpreter should remember that he will work hard, and that this hard work will last all his life – he will work, work, and once again, work hard (16).
>
> You have to prepare yourself that this is a very, very long process and you are only at the beginning of it (22)

A lifelong commitment to learning and self-improvement was impossible without a true passion for language. As some respondents noted, as soon as interpreters were no longer excited about language and frustrated with the job, they should quit the profession without delay to save themselves and their clients from painful interpreting projects.

> … when you have this passion for the language you really enjoy this development every day and you seek for the new opportunities to develop

> even if there are cases when you are poorly paid for your interpreting then you still feel that that was a way to get new knowledge or meet new people or to speak – to learn new words (8)
>
> … once you are fed up you become – this stress makes you aggressive and you may be annoyed, and it means that you involve your personal emotions in the work and it is not acceptable… it means that you need to change something in your life, because it is a lot of responsibility doing this kind of job, and it really influences the relations of other people and businesses – if you are not sure that you can do a 100 percent job, then you shouldn't (13)

The commitment is not simply about improving language skills (and doing so with dedication and humbleness) – it is about absorbing information about various fields of science, industry and social life so that the interpreter is prepared to interpret content on a wide variety of topics, so that he or she is "in the topic" and understanding "what they [the clients] are talking about" (18):

> … even little things can be useful, you never know what situation you may end up with, or in, you never know what kind of interpretation you may need, you never know what kind of information would be useful. So the world, life around you becomes an instrument for you, your tool, and I think that is wonderful so you just – you live and you enjoy and you learn – you should be curious about life basically. And that is how you become a good interpreter (7)

Some interpreters noted that with the modern computer networks and the access to information that it provides keeping up language skills was easier than before.

A lot of times their assignments took the interpreters to restricted access areas where they would never have been able to go if it weren't for their job. They also welcomed the chance to meet new people, go new places, and learn new skills:

> … being a freelance interpreter is quite an exciting thing to do because you meet new people all the time, you travel to new places you probably would never visit on your own – like one day you go to governor's residence reception and the next day you end up in a shelter for street kids and well one day you talk to drug addicts and then next day you talk to the director of the Hermitage museum (2)
>
> … you learn a lot in most different fields, I can tell you how to embalm dead bodies, how to make aluminuim, how to bake bread, and so on – how to stage a play in a theater … and a good point is that you are not in the same dull office, you do not have the same boss, you have a choice, it is a kind of a freedom (5)
>
> … you become a professional – maybe not a professional but a worker in different spheres while generally people have one or two professions and that is it (9)

In sum, professionalism is about lifelong passionate learning, curiosity about language but also about the world in general.

Given my theoretical argument that identification with a given speech community is dependent on the linguistic and cultural competence, it was important to determine how closely the respondents approached the competence of native speakers because only in that case would the link between competence and identification work. So far I have

reported my findings about the interpterers' linguistic and cultural competence from two perspectives – one, judging them from their formal qualifications (education, certification, working languages, foreign expereince); and two, judging them by evaluating their skills during the interview. The findings I present below cover the issue from a third perspective – participants' self-report. The topic was covered in the interviews under the rubric of fluency.

Competence: Speaking like a native

To obtain a self-reported measure of interpreters' linguistic competence, I asked questions about their perceived fluency in their working language. Another important issue was just how much of this fluency was deemed necessary.

In the first few interviews the respondents were directly asked to estimate their fluency in their working language. This has proven to be an ineffective way to address the issue. The interviewees sidestepped the question because anything other than a positive evaluation of their fluency would bring a risk of presenting themselves as lacking the necessary qualifications for the profession. So by the fourth interview I modified the strategy and started asking people to compare the fluency in their native language to that of their working language. Most people did not hesitate in admitting that the two were not, and could not be, a match, and did so without the risk of losing face and appearing unprofessional.

Interpreters claimed that the fluency was "extremely difficult to estimate" (2) with any accuracy. They differed in how they approached the question. There were two broad strategies. One was admitting that a foreign language, however well learned, could not equal a native language in fluency.

> Well of course I would say Russian being my native language and I am quite well in it because I graduated in fact from Russian department of the philological faculty so of course I would say that my fluency in Russian can't be compared with my fluency in English – in fact I think if you are not a bilingual it can't be compared (9)
>
> … I think my knowledge of English is sufficient for the task, but it is not superior to the insight a native speaker would have into his language – because ask those who learned the English grammar whether they would – whether they appreciate English poetry and ask for an honest answer – and I think it is difficult to appreciate poetry in a foreign language cause you do not have this native insight for the language (11).

They pointed out difficulties with vocabulary, terminology and "very technical language" (5), rate of speech and taking longer to remember the appropriate word, accents, intonations, and colloquialisms, and so on. Most of the people also noted that the only way to have equal competence in both languages was to be brought up bilingual. A corollary to this theme was the fluctuation in competence depending on the amount of the exposure to the working language:

> when I do spend much time in an English speaking environment, probably they are equal – Russian and English are equal. When I spend more time in Russia, probably it takes time for me to get used to, and after like a couple of days I think the fluency is equal, but at first it might be a bit slower in English (17)

The other strategy was based on claiming that whatever difference there was between native and acquired language, the knowledge in both languages was sufficient for expressing the most intricate ideas, and so the difference was of no consequence or significance and did not make them unprofessional or underqualified for their job:

> …of course it is not my native language and there are some words that I do not know especially if it is some very special kind of terminology, but I can always explain my thoughts in English words – maybe sometimes in a very clumsy way if it is a very sophisticated topic (5).

In its extreme form, the argument about adequate fluency becomes a statement that linguistic skills are irrelevant and experience is everything.

> … based on my experience I don't need even to speak English – I can explain with Russian or gestures and I will be OK. It is based on experience, it doesn't matter how good you are in English – you have logic, and if you have common sense, you will be OK (22)

Similar arguments were presented about other issues not directly related to interpretation per se – it is fine to speak with an accent as long as you know the topic, or it is fine to make grammatical mistakes as long as you have good personal contact with the client.

While most responses on the issue of linguistic fluency fell into the two categories described above (bilingualism and adequacy), there were three unique cases that are worth mentioning here. One interpreter noted that since the foreign language was learned in a systematic manner vs. the spontaneous acquisition of the native language, the fluency in the acquired language was actually superior. Another person lamented the detiorating effect of teaching English on her work – having to use basic vocabulary and simple

grammar with students made her forget the more advanced layers of the language. Finally, in one interview (24) I skipped this question because the respondent openly stated her displeasure with her level of English in the beginning of the interview (caused by a prolonged forced break from work) and I didn't want to make her any tenser than she already was. This strategy bore fruit – she relaxed noticeably toward the end of the interview.

Competence: Behaving like a native

While many interpreters doubted that they had near-native linguistic competence in their working language, only very few of them questioned the need for such competence. Opinions on cultural competence were more divided.

Asking the question about behaving like a local quickly proved ineffective; so starting with the fourth interview I introduced an indirect way of tackling this topic by asking the respondent to imagine being a spy in the given country and tell whether they would be detected or undetected and why. This proved to be a fruitful if controversial approach, good for eliciting stories and extreme reactions.

Many interpreters felt that achieving native competence required time and a complete immersion in the native context:

> I think it is very difficult to achieve … in a short period of time… someone who stays in the country for a longer period, and if a person is receptive by nature so to say, if the person is interested in the environment that they are in, I think it is possible after some time… but it takes time and it also takes a certain inclination (3)

Even in the case of a prolonged immersion and willingness to adapt, respondents usually claimed that it was theoretically possible to approach native competence, but impossible to completely shed all the "traces of foreign origin" (28) – unless you were born in that culture and grew up bilingual and bicultural. These foreign traces would reveal themselves in facial expressions, gestures, intonation patterns, physical appearance, and a general lack of cultural knowledge that natives take for granted – such as using a different order in counting with fingers, or ordering drinks without ice, or lacking trivia knowledge:

> There is a program on TV here… which is called Taxi. People come into a taxi, they are asked questions, and if they can answer them, they get money… the first number of questions, I think five – relate to that cultural background usually, the things that Russian people always know and … and they are easy for them. But once a foreigner participated in this program, and when he was asked these five simple questions for Russians – he didn't answer two or three of them, because he didn't know, and for us they were very easy (15)

At the same time, interpreters claimed that even without near-native competence in local ways and traditions, they could feel comfortable in the case of complete immersion in the foreign community:

> I cannot say that I feel at home but I surely feel at a familiar place, and a comfortable place, I am quite alright while in the States, I do not feel like a stranger, or a foreigner in the first sense of the word (17)

They claimed to have no problem orienting themselves and performing in a foreign environment – even if the language spoken there was not English.

Also, occasionally they were taken for locals – at least momentarily; or taken for a native of another English-speaking country (for example, while in the United States they were believed to be the natives of Britain or Australia). In other cases, lack of linguistic or cultural competence wasn't seen necessarily as foreignness – given the number of immigrants in both the UK and the US, interpreters believed that they could at the very least be taken for citizens of those countries, if not necessarily for people who lived there all their lives.

So when it came to competence, interpreters generally claimed to have adequate linguistic competence; cultural competence was deemed to be harder to attain at native levels; but it was still possible given the right conditions (prolonged immersion coupled with adaptability). While achieving near-native cultural competence was theoretically possible, was it useful and necessary from a practical standpoint? Does a good interpreter need to be able to behave like a local?

The general consensus on this issue that such ability was neither required nor critical for the job; yet if present, it could be an advantage:

> … it is better if he is able to behave like a local – it is not necessary for him to do it always but he has to be able to adjust to different environments (8)
>
> To be a good interpreter I wouldn't say they need that; but to be a smooth interpreter, I strongly believe one needs to know about behavior and social references (12)

Acquiring this knowledge was not the first priority. The top priority was linguistic competence and technical knowledge of the topic related to the assignment. Cultural knowledge, then, was necessary for "translating from one culture to another culture" (10)

and was particularly useful in situations where the interpreter was on an assignment abroad with a group of compatriots when the interpreter was trying to

> … show your people a certain standard of behavior, if it is part of your job, you also try to kindly gently advise on dress code and behavior code (7).

However, while knowing about local behavior was beneficial, frequent performance of these behaviors was not necessary and potentially detrimental for the work because no matter how close the interpreter could approximate the local behavior, it was still lacking true authenticity and looked awkward to the real locals:

> … nobody would believe that you are very good in everything – everybody understands that you know English that you learned it but it is not your native language so why be somebody else if you are not (4)
>
> … if you don't remain yourself, you don't become a foreigner but you stop being yourself, that's why you finally as we say in Russian sit between two chairs (9)

Behaving like a local could be acceptable when done "just for fun" and "not in a professional situation" (20). In a professional setting, apart from being awkward and unnatural, it made the interpretation less fluent for the listeners. The awkwardness made the listeners more aware of the presence of the interpreter and attracted unnecessary attention to their persona:

> I noticed quite a few times that when foreign people speaking Russian try to be too colloquial or use too modern expressions… it strikes me, I feel much better if they use classical standard Russian, so this is what I think also strikes

> English speaking people when we Russian speak English – so I try to be as neutral as possible (26)

Apart from the danger of losing neutrality, behaving like a local also required a malleability of identity which some interpreters were not ready to demonstrate:

> … only after forty I realized that to have as little accent as possible, you have to be a monkey, you have to imitate a lot, that is one thing, and secondly … you must be willing to submit your own feeling of citizenship, of nationality, to the other nationality (26)

In sum, interpreters most readily agreed to the requirement of near-native linguistic competence. They placed cultural competence a distant second and preferred to possess it as knowledge rather than perform it as behavior.

Cultural identity: Growing up

Having described the interpreters' views on linguistic and cultural competence, let me now turn to the description of cultural identity. I have made three theoretical propositions about cultural identity. The first one was related to the difference in identity caused by a monolingual vs. a bilingual (multilingual) upbringing and exposure to a single vs. multiple speech communities and cultures.

In this respect my sample of thirty interpreters was very one-sided – 28 of them grew up monolingual; the remaining two weren't clear-cut cases of bilingualism either. One of them grew up speaking both Ukrainian and Russian - languages that are closely related both linguistically and culturally; the other one grew up in the U.S. until he was six and spoke both Russian and English until then; but afterwards his family moved back to Russia where he lived for most of his life.

Cultural identity: Current state

Besides growing up in a monolingual and monocultural environment, most respondents also had a cultural identity centered around their home speech community, despite their knowledge of foreign languages, exposure to people from other speech communities and international traveling experience.

All 29 Russian interviewees described themselves as Russians, affirmed that despite the international experience and linguistic and cultural competence, they remained Russian and couldn't possibly become anything else:

> I see myself completely Russian because I don't even try to – to look differently (15)
>
> I have spend most of my life here in Russia so it is kind of natural that I perceive myself Russian and I do find that I have certain cultural habits or certain views that I could have only acquired through my education and my travels which distinguish me from many other people in my city or in my country, but I can only identify myself as a Russian (19)

So for many interpreters the core of their identity was Russian, but with some acquired "Western" or "English" views and behaviors. These changes were deep enough to be perceived both by the interpreters and by the people in their surroundings:

> … my friends would say that I am quite Westernized you know. I became Westernized, Americanized or something like that but I am just a hundred percent Russian (18)
>
> … I feel I am Russian but I realize that sometimes to some friends I appear as a foreigner – in the school they gave me the nickname sometimes, English

> woman – because we – even at the age of twelve we used to speak English with my friend during school breaks just for practice – just because our teacher told us that it is very useful to speak English at all times – we tried to do that because we knew that it was useful and maybe to show off slightly (23)

The changes often lead to a "widening of horizons" (18), to a higher tolerance for foreign ways and habits, to becoming, in one respondent's words, "a man of the world" (25). It taught them to avoid ethnocentrism, cultural superiority and the desire to translate every foreign experience into Russian terms and to judge it on Russian terms:

> … you have to accept that people are different and you have to accept that certain differences cannot be overcome and you cannot argue because your experience is so vastly different that you cannot bridge this gap by simply explaining things ... when people live in the same country, they know they are separated by class or gender or whatever but it kind of still seems to them that it is very easy to explain things and that it is kind of – that if people don't understand them it is because they don't want to… but when you deal with people who come from a different culture, you sometimes appreciate how vastly different life and experiences may be and it is –it does influence your worldview a lot, and it tends to make you more liberal essentially… it is kind of inescapable, once you get this kind of education, this kind of experience you – unless you have a certain psychological predisposition to being very opinionated or kind of paranoid... When you work as an interpreter, when you become a mediator – you forget about your opinion… it does make you more

> accepting of other worldviews, because language is essentially a worldview (19)

This tolerance also allowed them to live comfortably in a foreign environment (even if they weren't fluent in the local language), to relocate if necessary – or to use the acquired knowledge to reform the local Russian ways for the best. It gave them "more options in life" (11):

> … knowing several languages is like having several keys in your pocket to the reality, and I think the same approach have the people whom I met who know several languages (24)

Besides tolerance and versatility, the experience often lead to a re-evaluation of the native culture – and to a more critical view of the chauvinistic compatriots who refused to accept foreign ways without denigrating them:

> … there is always a flipside of it – see I am not happy with a lot of things that Russian people are happy – and I cannot find – I cannot find good reasons to see why that is good… I feel frustrated, so this is not a good thing, and many Russians are quite happy with it, they think it is good – maybe I have lost this sense of commonality (13)

So the tolerance for others was often accompanied by self criticism and made the interpreter stand out among their compatriots. Still another possibility was an increased sense of responsibility of being a mediator between people who lacked bilingual skills. This duty came from the understanding that interpreters had wider cultural knowledge than monolingual people:

> … it gives me more responsibility to be an intermediary for them, to understand each other so my maybe main point is to help them to reach understanding (3)

Yet several people have refused to see their experience as in any way unique or different from the life of the rank and file:

> … I think being a cosmonaut is much more unique than being an interpreter (8)
>
> … imagine a doctor, a medical doctor, and a medical doctor is quite different from just other people, just because he knows much in his professional sphere right – and same thing happens with a linguist, right, he knows the language and in this way he is different – he or she is different from other people so it is just – the professional sphere… I don't think that there is something very special with interpreters and translators (28)

This is a very important development that at first seemed to contradict my theoretical expectations; but gradually this idea of interpretation as just another ordinary profession started to make sense – and explain many other important things. The key here is the separation of the personal and professional lives and an individual's ability to bracket what happens with them in their professional life and to block it from invading their personal life.

Cultural identity: Conflict of values

This ability to separate the two dimensions of life breaks the simplistic line of reasoning that I presented in my theoretical section: learning the language gives you a new worldview, working with that language allows that worldview to infiltrate your

psyche and cause value conflicts. I discovered that my interviewees were perfectly capable of at least partially stopping this infiltration. Furthermore, many interpreters didn't have to go through torturous soul searching when presented with conflicting values from different speech communities and didn't need to decide with what side to take allegiance because the choice has already been made for them:

> Translators and interpreters here usually say, take the side of those who pay you money, so usually if I need to choose, I choose that side, probably it is a bit pragmatic approach, but still it works. In other cases it depends on who is right and who is not, there are some cases when people were arguing and you really understood that the question was not in the topic itself but in cultural differences, and you had to take the side of those who are really – who is right not in local terms, but in general terms (15)

So an interpreter can be loyal to the side that hired and paid her. Another reason for not taking sides was self-protection – the need not to let the work become your life, to keep yourself sane – like a surgeon or a nurse not getting attached to a terminally ill patient:

> … some translators or interpreters, they are already getting that somehow subconscious feeling that they shouldn't get involved to some conflict, or they shouldn't take sides. So it is partly their professional maybe standard and it is partly their personal safety (3)

Since the decision of allegiance was often not theirs to make, and since they could block the very need to make that decision if they managed to treat interpretation as just a professional and not a personal activity, many interpreters have never experienced the feeling of conflicting values coming from different communities:

> … I think I am in a different situation because even when I speak a foreign language I mainly working on behalf of Russian people every time so I am – I don't have such conflict actually… I don't have to make the choice (29)

Some would also say that although the experience sounded familiar and was clearly understandable, they themselves could not remember their own experience like that:

> … I am sure I have come across such a situation but it might be difficult to come with an example right now (10)
>
> … truly speaking I cannot say I experienced anything like that – truly speaking I cannot remember now any situation when I really had a problem of value conflict (20)

Still another approach was to see this conflict as part of maturation and coming to the awareness that the world cannot be perceived through idealistic rosy glasses:

> I would look at it broader, we all have this conflict at a certain age I think, mostly when we start earning money and we have to choose between good and what we were taught as children (23)

In sum, when interpreters were able to separate their personal and professional lives, these value conflicts did not occur.

If they did occur, the separation made them less painful – the switching from one value system to another occurred naturally, without doubt, soul searching or judgment – especially if it related to superficial differences:

> I don't think I have two ways, two modes of behavior. Maybe in a way I do – it's more like shaking hands and these kinds of things, but that is basically like a set of rules that you know (2)

If deeper seated value differences were involved, more sophisticated strategies could be employed:

> … there are some norms that which don't influence your personality and which don't influence your standards of behavior, your moral standards. But there are different things which do interfere with your moral standards – and that is why I would keep to my moral standards but on the other hand I would try to respect other norms and standards, so far as they don't interfere with my moral standards… I would say in Rome do as Romans do but so far as it doesn't prevent you from being yourself (9)

In general, the interpreters displayed a wide variety of solutions to dealing with these conflicts. On top of the strategies described above, they would behave "depending on the situation" (6): based on how they felt at the moment (7), they would try to reconcile the values by "finding an opening" (30) or they would offload the burden of dealing with conflictual situations to supervisors (13).

So on the one hand, the conflict of values could be dealt with more or less effortlessly by using the recipes described above. But in some cases the conflict did lead to painful and difficult situations:

> … it is a big compromise of course… you respect a new culture, you appreciate it since you came there, which means there is a strong reason for you to – having chosen this new culture, but of course you were born in your native culture and you do not want to escape from it, you don't want to leave it behind, it is part of you as well, so I think it's very hard – don't get me wrong, I know how incredibly difficult this is (7)

The situation was particularly difficult if the personal and professional lives could not be separated. One instance of that was settling down in a foreign environment for a long period of time, when bracketing out foreign values completely was no longer possible:

> … it essentially boils down to your decision where you are going to live. Because if you intend to live in the country where you come from – well that is what I decided for myself anyway – then you can actually insist on your patterns of behavior even if they contradict the accepted norm of the country that you are visiting, the country that you are living in – and kind of openly say to people that I am a guest here, and I accept your culture to a certain extent because I respect it, but I cannot completely change because essentially come from a different country and I am going back there, and when people tend to be quite accepting of your behaviors which don't fit in, because they accept that you are a guest but it gets much more difficult when you say I am going to live here with you forever, but I am not going to accept you know your lifestyle (19)

The case described here was one of the rare instances when a respondent's thoughts followed a pattern predicted by my theoretical framework and competence inevitably lead to the identification with the community. Other instances included decisions to choose one community over the other and stick to its values – several interpreters said that in a situation with conflicting values they simply went with their native community – especially if the values offered by the other community were morally questionable by the native norms:

> … as a Russian, I take the side of the Russian mentality, and sometimes things are really shocking, like I had a tour group from China and there was one person in a wheelchair, the rest of the group was walking, and coming out of the palace there were two ways to exit – there were steps right in front of us and there was a ramp – some thirty meters to the right – so I walked towards that ramp keeping in mind that there is a wheelchair, and for that I was scolded by their tour leader, he said, if he is in a wheelchair, he is not paying extra, he shouldn't receive, that sick person should not make worse the life of the whole group – I thought it was so immoral, it is so rude, so cruel to that person in the wheelchair, but they have just a different mentality and that person in the wheelchair didn't mind trying the steps if he is on a group tour. That was something that really shocked me (5)

The same respondent who described the difficult decisions facing a long term sojourner also gave the only explicit confirmation to one of my main theoretical predictions – the claim that language subverts your thinking whether you like it or not and creates identification with the community where this language is spoken:

> … this is a difficult situation cause you are making choices all the time when you do the interpreting… you do change to a certain extent anyway, whether you want it or not, like in your country you don't accept everything, like there are things that you don't like in your own country, but then because you live there you do them anyway, and you can condemn them but you cannot say that you do not partake of them, it is not to say that you are not complicit and it is the same with – the other language, which is kind of your second native

> language so to say and you kind of become complicit in that culture, so to say, so even things that you don't like they kind of – you still do them – anyway, I think that even like Russians who learn English and become translators and interpreters … they disapprove of a lot of things, disapprove of a lot of cultural patterns in let's say the United States or Great Britain and still they do more them, even if they disapprove of them than say somebody who is Arab or I don't know Uzbek or whatever… it is not part of my culture, and still I behave more like that than people who know nothing about that (19)

Why was she the only person to have noted this explicitly? A megalomaniac explanation would be to say that she was the only one to have the same acute perceptiveness as myself to see it; a conspiracy theory explanation would be to claim that the fact that only one person has mentioned it explicitly demonstrates that this phenomenon is so deep-seated and taken for granted that its very explicit absence confirms its implicit ubiqitousness (*à la* cold war arguments that the lack of conclusive evidence of the existence of the Soviet air defense system doesn't prove that it in fact doesn't exist, but that it is so sophisticated that it is undetectable).

The more plausible explanations will be examined in detail in the next chapter; I will only say here that the reason why my line of argument breaks up is the interpreters' ability to separate their personal and professional lives. Doing it was particularly easy for them because they mostly worked with English – the language or international business and diplomacy, almost completely stripped of its cultural bearings. Moreover, the cultural component was often missing since even the English-speaking clients for whom they worked were not native speakers of English.

The influence of native and non-native speaker clients on the work of the interpreter was brought up by one of the respondents early in the interview process and became an important point of discussion in the subsequent interviews. The results of these discussions are presented in the following section.

Cultural identity: Native vs. non-native clients

There are a number of differences for an interpreter between translating for a person who is speaking their native language and one that is speaking an acquired language. While several of my respondents said that translating for non-native speakers was easier, this advantage was balanced or even outweighed by numerous disadvantages. Most interpreters preferred to work with native speakers. This was an issue that all Russian-English interpreters had to deal with; understandably, it wasn't a familiar topic for the two Russian-German interpreters in my sample. I posed the question about the native vs. non-native clients to all the interpreters in similar expressions; and while interpreters working with English immediately knew what I was talking about, both German interpreters required additional explanations (which in one case, despite my efforts, still failed and the question was misunderstood). Some English interpreters reported that working with non-native speakers was more frequent in their experience than working with natives.

The advantage of non-native clients was the simplified language they spoke, free of complex vocabulary and sophisticated grammar. Even more importantly, it was free of any regional peculiarities – idiomatic expressions, colloquialisms, and dialects. The speakers themselves were aware of the limitations of their linguistic skills and often took additional care in word choices and articulation:

> …they themselves don't feel completely free and they are usually very aware of what they are saying, of the language they use, so they try very hard to sound intelligible to you and because English is not their native language they tend to mainly rely on expressions that are mainly international currency (19)

Simplified language from clients also meant that the interpreters themselves could use basic vocabulary and didn't need any advanced skills to succeed:

> when I work with non native speakers I understand that English is not their native language so I try to speak not very fast and I try to be more understandable, like to use simple structures and simple words. I always try to check and make sure that they understand everything that I am saying and that they know all the terms that I am using (10)

But simplicity was not necessarily an advantage – it required the interpreter to be more precise in the choice of words or otherwise risk misunderstanding – and sometimes end up with misunderstanding even if the choice is done right, to the point that occasionally the interpreter would have to ask for clarification and guide the speaker:

> … we face a lot of problems with them in communication, sometimes you have to help them – do you want to say this and that, because their English sometimes is so poor – but it is the only way to communicate, so we have nothing to do (29)

If the interpreter had to work with non-native speakers continuously, it could reflect poorly on his or her language skills because most of the knowledge would never get used. It robbed the profession of one of its most attractive features – the ability to grow and develop continuously.

Lexical difficulties were often exacerbated by substandard pronunciation – this was especially common if the interpreter worked with a speaker whose native language wasn't of Germanic, Romanic, or Slavic origin:

> … especially Chinese people, they speak awful English and half of the time you can't understand what they are speaking and people think that you are a bad translator, and you can't explain to them that the person speaks pidgin English and you just don't understand a word of what he is saying (4)

So while working with non-native speakers had its advantages it also presented the interpreter with many difficulties and didn't provide some of the opportunities that working with native speakers afforded them.

For some interpreters who mostly worked with non-native speakers, working with American or English people was a "real holiday" (29), especially in terms of professional growth:

> I usually prefer to work with native speakers because professionally it is much more fulfilling but in terms of easiness, it is more easy to work with non natives (19)

On the other hand, there were difficult situations with natives as well: they would use colloquial or regional expressions, speak with an unfamiliar accent, and, to make matters worse, assume that they were expressing themselves correctly and since this was their mother tongue they could not be misunderstood.

Though most interpreters had a slight preference for working with native speakers, in the end the differences didn't matter very much; first, because both groups were a mixed blessing; second, because work was work and needed to be done regardless

of who was the client; and third, because in many cases education of the clients was more important than their provenance:

> The native speakers also they speak different English – that is the first thing, and the second thing if they don't speak properly or if they pronounce differently – depends on the situation – if they had a good education, I mean reliable one – they speak well – if not, well, what can I do, I have to work with them (22)

In some cases, well educated non-native spoke more sophisticated language than then natives (23), to the point that the interpreter could even learn new words from them (7).

Cultural identity: Ideal situation vs. reality

Just like there is a difference between an idealized multilingual and multicultural interpreter and reality, there is also a difference between an ideal situation of working with tactful and cultured individuals vs. the unfortunate reality (at least sometimes) of dealing with "not very cultured species of men" (13) and facing "arrogance that influences a lot of things that interpreters do" (16). Such work could be frustrating, and if any change for the interpreter occurred, it was degradation rather than cultural enrichment:

> … if you have to translate a very dumb person that also gets on your nerves, if he is speaking in very primitive language or very slowly or if he expressing his thoughts in a very clumsy like sometimes Russian bureaucrats, they use too many words (5)

Problems of this sort generally arose with clients who thought too highly of themselves because they occupied a managerial position or clients who had limited experience of

communicating through interpreters and who spoke in very long chunks and expected the interpreter to be able to cope with any kind of linguistic difficulty thrown at them:

> Educate your customers, educate people about translation, interpreting, cause I am facing it now with simultaneous interpreting, they think that an interpreter is a magician, you come, you sit in this magic booth and they speak and you just interpret – I don't know, on money printing, with all these levels of security or about heart surgery – you are just this person who interprets let's say at the speed of 120 words per minute and you have to explain to them that you are asking for materials in advance not because you are unprofessional but because you are professional and you need to be prepared (11)

It was important to make clients understand that even though interpreters were part of the service personnel, they didn't deserve to be treated like servants, but rather deserved respectful, equal treatment. When such treatment wasn't given, it was time to consider changing jobs, or (in one case) to change careers[36]:

> … if there is no respect from the side that is actually recruiting you – say good bye, and that is all about it (22)

In sum, there were clients whose abilities were so limited abilities that they wouldn't know what to do even with a perfect interpretation – the problem was not understanding the language of the message, but rather not having enough knowledge or intelligence to understand the message itself:

> …[in China] we went to some temples… and they didn't know anything about culture – Russian or Chinese and – oh that's true, they were not very educated, so when you try and translate something like – for example some words from

> Buddhism, like bodhisattva for example – for them if you say that in Russian or in English they still don't understand what it is all about (4)

In other words, it took both the client and the interpreter to produce an interpretation that was effective; which required the interpreter to be proficient linguistically and culturally, but also required the client to be a professional in his or her field (22).[37]

I have so far reviewed the interpreters' ideas concerning competence; working with the interview data reveals that this question could not be treated in isolation, but required a discussion of adjacent topics, such as interpreters' education, foreign experience, as well as the fluency and education of their clients. Having reviewed the competence node, I will now turn to personal involvement and the satellite themes that emerged from the interviews.

Personal involvement: Roles and metaphors

The topic of invisibility and involvement was tackled in a similar fashion in the interviews as the other topics – ask indirect questions first, then address the issue directly. As the interviews progressed, the scope of indirect and direct questions changed: first, some questions turned out to be ineffective; second, respondents proposed new ways of talking about the topic and new issues related to it; and third, the old questions were recast into the terms proposed by the respondents.

While identification is a part of who interpreters *are*, invisibility and involvement are part of what they *do*. So it made sense to start the initial approach to the topic with a question about what interpreters do. The answers to this questions gave a picture of the interpreters' perceptions of their role. They also provided a range of metaphorical

descriptions for the role that sometimes were more revealing than the definitions of the role that they offered.

The descriptions of the interpreter's role were mostly centered around text and information transfer and the "ambassador" (30) position of the interpreter. The job was about "conveying information" (1), but doing so in such a way that "an environment of understanding" (18) was created. The interpreter served as a "linguistic and cultural bridge" (13) – since cultural elements were involved, this was not simply "fostering" or "facilitating" communication (7, 12), it was "communication plus" (25). Given the fast paced and volatile nature of the job, even though it was good if the interpretation was stylistically accurate (1), often there wasn't enough time to "articulate everything in elegant English" (10). It was important to translate at the level of "culture and ideas" rather than at the level of "words and sentences" (24) and make sure that the intentions of the speakers were conveyed (25).

So the role of the interpreter was to convey ideas and intentions and through that "make people feel closer" (14). In multiple cases, the interpreters were described as a bridges, or their task described as making bridges. Other metaphors used by the respondents also highlighted the passive conduit role that the ideal mediator should perform[38]. They called themselves a microphone "passing thoughts and emotions from one bank of the river to the other" (11) or a telephone, "a device that establishes communication" (23), or an antenna, a relay (12). In that position, their was no place for an active role:

> You should forget your emotions. Cause an interpreter is like a painter and a copyist. A copyist may have to copy one thing, or he may have to copy something else, but he cannot be himself while doing a copy of a painting (5)

In the sense that interpretation involved a lowered self awareness it was not unlike meditation because it was about "making a void between two ideas" (12).

So the respondents largely described their role in conduit terms – at least in idealized situations. There was no question that transgressions from the ideal did occur; the important question, then, was when and why they happened. To approach this topic, I asked the interpreters if their job involved counseling, advice giving, and conflict resolution.

Personal involvement: Resolving conflict

Most interpreters agreed that being a diplomat and a psychologist is not intrinsically a part of the job, but that there were situations – which were "an exception rather than the rule" (3) – when taking on this role was necessary to "not allow the conflict arise" (16). As one of them described this contradiction,

> Yes it is part of the job but even when it happens, it shouldn't be part of the job because my idea of a translator is just to transfer what is being said on one side, to translate it directly to the other side, and the more impartial you are the better, so I don't think that the translator should work as some kind of a diplomat – resolve conflict between the parties… but that does happen every now and then… somehow unconsciously (23)

The situations that called for a diplomatic involvement on the part of the interpreter usually involved escalating tension – rude language, name calling, heated discussion and

so on. Tension usually arose from cultural differences or simple misunderstanding; in those cases it was the interpreter's task to "react to conflictual situations", "sense what is going wrong" and then "keep the emotions down" and "make both sides comfortable" (20) This job of "overcoming some angles" (3) and "creating and controlling the atmosphere" (26) served the purpose of making the communication flow smoother and at the same time provided a less stressful work environment for the interpreter.

It required "good prediction skills" (24) and the ability to evaluate situations and people with precision. These skills came with experience:

> … you just become a psychologist automatically after twenty years of experience, after meeting so many people, especially after working as a tour guide – after meeting the tour leader I just need 30 seconds and I can tell if that's a nasty person or not (5)

To "mitigate things" (16), an interpreter could employ a variety of methods, the most important one being stylistic filtering. When the discussions escalated into name calling and swearing, the interpreter would omit rude language and translate statements delivered in a raised voice and with threatening intonation using a neutral pitch. Another strategy was to switch from the common first person interpreting to using third person speech, i.e. instead of translating an invective in words like "I think you are a swine" the interpreter would say "He/she is not happy with you". Several female interpreters also admitted to using the traditional feminine role of a pacifier, especially if the quarrelling sides were males (which was almost always the case):

> … I took the advantage of being a woman, so you can smooth the situation – again just use your sense of humor, or something natural… I do that quite

> often… when you show that you are embarrassed a little bit, that you cannot translate any rude words or something like that – just naturally cannot – and it works well to me (18)

No matter what strategy was used, almost all the respondents highlighted that the interpreters had to use their judgment in deciding when to take on the role of the peace broker; and that it was still a choice not to take on that responsibility, or to let other people take it:

> … if the participants are uncooperative, then in this situation I would just prefer to call the local coordinator or to call the headquarters and just ask what to do, because I wouldn't take such responsibility for the group (1)

Finally, in some situations being a diplomat wasn't even an option – for example, in simultaneous interpreting there was no time for any filtering; in some high level negotiations the participants actually insisted on having everything, including impolite language, translated verbatim without "rounding the corners" (30).

To further investigate the respondents' thoughts on involvement in general and on the issue of advice giving, I gave them two scenarios. First came from an early interview (2) where the respondent described the following inappropriate situation involving asking private questions in a public setting ("the bedroom question"); another was a more extreme scenario with helping refugees that I devised to solicit more outspoken responses. The reactions to these scenarios are described in the following two sections.

Personal involvement: The bedroom question

In interview two, when asked if the clients ever make her feel embarrassed, my respondent gave me the following example:

> … well, Europeans, because I haven't had that much experience with Chinese or Americans – I know they wouldn't ask like – well, quite a recent example – who was he – I think his position was like a senior legal advisor of a big group of companies asks us to his home and brings us in the living room and my boss says, can we also see the bedroom? or something or how much do you pay for electricity – that's a bit weird (2)

So in subsequent interviews I gave this scenario to the interviewees and asked them what they would do if they were the interpreter in that case. I described a Russian interpreter accompanying a group of Russian businessmen traveling in America where a local person offers to show them a typical American house.

The answers to this scenario show that there are two major factors determining the interpreter's behavior in cases like this: first, his or her own judgment of the severity of the situation and how much mediation is needed; second, the context of the interaction: its level of formality and client's willingness to receive feedback. The interpreter was between a rock and hard place – the choice was between translating verbatim and offending the host; or intervening and potentially offending the client that was with them (or both the client and the host). So they picked a path that would minimize both of those risks. This was, as one interviewee put it, "a question of degree" (19).

The severity of the situation was seen as critical by some respondents, and perfectly acceptable by others; if it was seen as serious, the respondents would either try to tell the side asking the question that it was inappropriate (and perhaps do so in a such way that the other side doesn’t understand what is happening – such as "pulling by the sleeve" (5)), or explain to the side to which the question was directed that asking such

questions was appropriate in the Russian culture and apologize for having to ask the question. In either case, the interpreters would normally also try to alter the message stylistically to make it less direct and more tactful:

> I would ask the host – how would a bedroom like in general look like – from a cultural point of view would it be different, cause see I could say that we heard that a bedroom in an American house – there is a master bedroom and there is a bedroom for kids, and these are different things, and depending on how open the host is he or she may either show you the master bedroom or the kid's bedroom. But I would not ask this question directly… I am also thinking about the Russian businessmen who may probably not understand this personal space issue, and to maintain a positive, good communication between the American and the Russian side I would paraphrase the question, I would not ask it directly (13)

Besides the perceived severity of the situation, another factor was the formality of the relationship between the two sides, and the two sides and the interpreter.

The more formal the atmosphere of the interaction was, the less willing the interpreters were to give any kind of commentary. However, most agreed that the situation of being a visitor in someone's private house was already informal enough to warrant a more relaxed code of behavior:

> I think if the person is showing his or her house, he is 75 percent ready to show the bedroom (14)

So the course of action depended on the goodwill of the two sides whether to treat this situation as appropriate or not. It also depended on "the distance the speaker makes

between him and the interpreter" (6) – the more formal this relationship, the less likely an intervention of any kind was.

So the majority of the interpreters were willing to change their behavior depending on the situation and chart the course that would cause the least tension and embarrassment. Yet about a fourth of the respondents didn't see any need for deliberation at all – they would just translate the question "with no hesitation" (26) because it was not "the interpreter's business to decide" (11). In this, and in fact in any other case, a true professional had only one choice – translate verbatim and keep personal involvement to a minimum:

> Very simply, I would just interpret the question – very simply – because the way it was asked and you know I am not a judge, I am an interpreter – and to me that is a clear example of unprofessional behavior, that this interpreter maybe hasn't had the training, that professional interpreters have – he or she just didn't know that it was not to him to decide what to interpret and what not (25)

Since only a minority of interpreters chose to stay completely uninvolved, I wanted to investigate the issue further. What cases in general warranted involvement? How severe did the situation had to get for even the resisting minority to get involved? To continue this topic, I devised an extreme situation scenario that was about working with refugees.

Personal involvement: Working with refugees

In my third interview, the respondent shared this fascinating sketch with me when discussing potential conflict of values:

> I talked in the United States with a Russian immigrant who immigrated after the revolution but during the second world war he was interviewing Russian people who asked for I think asylum in the United States or something. And the United States were – the authorities were not inclined to give them this asylum and they were all sent back to Russia and he understood what would happen to them. And he told me that that was the most difficult job he was doing (3)

The narrative reminded me of Waldensjö's (1998) study of legal interpreters in Sweden working with refugees, so I concocted the following sob story that would serve as a probe in subsequent interviews:

> … the Swedish government would interview people seeking refugee status in Sweden and so interpreters would facilitate discussions between Swedish officials and refugee seekers – and the interpreters a lot of times felt so sorry for those people – for the refugee seekers, that they would try to help them, they would try to give them advice, they would explain things to them – they would even paraphrase their statements to make them appear stronger – more structured, more logical (28)

I then asked the respondents to tell me what they would do if placed in that fictitious scenario. This was a continuation of the bedroom scenario – only now the severity of the situation has increased, as has the alleged involvement of the interpreter. If the explaining and stylistic filtering proposed by the bedroom scenario could still be reconciled with professional ethics – at least to some extent – the refugee scenario clearly involved a violation of those standards.

Predictably, far fewer people were willing to encourage such behavior. Only two openly admitted that they would indeed go to great lengths to help the refugees:

> I think I would do the same – I think it is appropriate to be on the side of those who are in a disadvantaged position (16)
>
> … if I see that I could do something and I feel the need for that well I can imagine that there may be some situations where I would maybe have to violate some professional conduct (3)

Several other people were willing to make some compromises – they understood that while it was natural to want to help people in need, a violation of ethics in the form of heavy editing and on-the-fly advice was unacceptable; but they also admitted that "some editing" was always "involved and predetermined when translating and interpreting", so minor stylistic modifications were unavoidable. They also believed that they could give refugees advice outside of the translation situation if they felt that was necessary.

Still most interpreters felt that personal involvement in this situation was completely unacceptable, even given the unique circumstances. A professional interpreter had to be able to separate "work duties and personal feelings" (3); if the feelings were to strong to suppress, it was time to quite the job:

> I had this problem myself because I worked a couple of times for foreign people who were imprisoned here for the crime that they committed, which they claimed they did not commit… so I had to translate for a lawyer… and people would be put into prison… and maybe they were guilty, I still don't know, most likely they were, but I felt so sorry for them – really it was such a hard thing for me to do so I did that a couple of times … and then I told the

> lawyer, I am sorry I am not going to participate in this work anymore because I feel so sorry for them, and they look at you as chased animals – and you feel like you must do anything for them and then – it is not right in terms of work (23)

Getting involved was trespassing on the job of psychologists and consultants in that interpreters offered emotional assistance in those cases; and on the job of the lawyers since they inevitably made decisions for themselves whether the client deserved the assistance or not. In the latter situation, they were treading on dangerous ground because they could be "liable for distorting legal information" (25). One experienced interpreter suggested that such behavior could only be deemed acceptable by young idealistic interpreters – with time came the understanding that the interpreter has no right to take on this responsibility.

The consequences of such involvement became particularly obvious when an interpreter had a chance to meet the same clients later and see the results of his or her decisions:

> I have such – an example, very similar example from my experience – a friend of mine – it was rather long ago, for a civil company – they were making aircraft and they were teaching pilots, foreign pilots – they were not enough educated and so on and he helped them at an examination, because they didn't know what to do once – and he knew already, and the exam was arranged through interpretation, interpreter – he helped them a lot but some time later he had himself to board the plane, and this guy, not educated enough, was the

> pilot – he didn’t know what to do to the aircraft, so he felt scared, he understood – he was wrong helping him (29)

But even if it didn't have far-reaching consequences, it had an immediate impact on the people involved in the interaction because they had no way of telling when such an involvement occurred. Had the interpreter's input been flagged as such, it would have been acceptable; but since it could pass for the principals' speech it was unfair to the clients:

> … interfering is always bad to me, because it takes advantage in some gap in the understanding of some role of the interpreter. The speaker thinks his message – her message will be conveyed exact the same way as it was said, and the people hearing – listening, the listener think that what he or she is hearing is the exact same message that the speaker has said. Very seldom it is that they are conscious that no matter how hard the interpreter tries, he cannot convey the exact message that he had heard, that even if he tried (12)

So the more extreme refugee scenario helped define the boundaries of interpreters' transgression while working. But it also alerted me to a third possibility – rather than choosing between getting involved or not, the interpreter could also choose to give cultural or linguistic advice, and share opinions after the job – in fact while still on the job, but not while interpreting, and most likely in the presence of just one party not both. My next question, then, was to find out under what conditions such advice giving was most likely to happen.

Personal involvement: Giving advice

When given the bedroom scenario, several interpreters mentioned that their involvement would depend on the formality of the context. When asked about what situations in general called for advice giving from them, they expanded the context issue further – it would depend on their relationship with the clients, or the social distance between the clients and the interpreter (i.e. whether the relationship is more formal or informal). The closer they were to the client and the less formal the context, the more willing they would be to help the clients by giving advice.

Besides distance, just like with the bedroom question, advice giving in general was dependant on the severity of the situation and on how strong the threat of "breaking the communication" (9) was. If the discussion came to sensitive topics like politics and religion, there was more reason for filtering since disruptions were more likely with those topics.

The amount of advice giving also depended on the geographic location and the provenance of the clients and the interpreter. If the interpreter was accompanying a group of compatriots abroad or a group of foreigners at home, he or she was likely to engage in explaining "the realities of local life" (15) (such as communal apartments in older districts of Russian cities) to them, and take on the role of the tour guide from time to time, as well as explain the rules of the local etiquette:

> …they would ask all kinds of questions and we would have to instruct them, what kind of clothes to wear, what weather to expect, and what souvenirs to take (1)

Still another reason for giving advice and avoiding tension was the fear that should the tension arise, the interpreter would be blamed for it no matter whose fault it really was[39].

Yet many people weren't keen on giving advice, regardless of the situation. For some of them, it wasn't so much the context that determined giving or not giving advice; it was the decision of the client rather than of the interpreter:

> … after negotiations I explained my attitude regarding their opinion about the case, about the proposal – so just in this way. -- @ Was that their request of your initiative to do that? -- It was their request. -- @ Would you do it without a request? – Usually I try not to intervene because I quite believe that translator is merely a translator – he should keep his own opinion until he really feels it is necessary to say it (8)
>
> Very often when we come to different meetings they ask for my advice about what questions they should ask or what questions they shouldn't ask or whether they behave this way or that way so of course I usually tell them (10)

Others didn't give advice because they did not see the need for it. That was usually for two reasons[40].

First, some interpreters felt that the clients who hired them (who were most often Russian) had enough international experience and were sophisticated enough not to need cultural priming. This may have been necessary "at the end of the eighties or the beginning of the nineties" but now thanks to the " dynamic development in Russia" the big gap has closed:

> I am doing it in a smaller extent now, in former times, yes, I had to explain a lot – or rather I wanted to explain quite a lot of things now I am more – I am quieter now let's say… because people travel more, people know more – not because of the knowledge, but because of experience, practical experience –

> so they are let's say more ready to assume that other people may live in a different way (26)

It must be noted, however, that this applied mostly "young people who really travel a lot" (29), and older clients still required cultural advice to keep them out of embarrassing situations.

The second reason for not giving advice was trying to let the clients experience the interaction in its entirety without any censorship and filtering:

> … we are not in a kindergarden, they are responsible for their actions, they have their own right to ask questions, they have the right to be responsible for the consequences of what they do… I want people to have their own experience, and not taken by the hand and shown the way – be taken along the tourist path everywhere… And maybe they want to have this little bit of communication problem, a little bit of an issue, a little of that unhappy face of the person that they are dealing with, and if that is what they want they should have a right to have that (7)
>
> … it is not my point just to make them try to avoid a scandal or some probably unpleasant situation – it is just – it is up to them, if they want a scandal - they can have it (28)

So the views on advice giving were divided. The choices depended on the contextual factors described above; but intertwined with those factors were the interpreters feelings of how willing they were to "mix professional and personal things" (28). It depended on how they understood their role and their stance on the issue of visibility. This issue will be discussed in the next chapter.

Personal involvement: Advice timing

Before I delve into the discussion of invisibility, I need to analyze advice giving once again from a timing standpoint. Sometimes advice was given before the interpretation; sometimes during it, sometimes afterwards. The timing often determined the content of the advice given.

Pre-interpretation advice usually dealt with cultural issues – in some cases, this was even codified in the form of a predeparture orientation. During the interpretation, the task of extra talk was usually clearing roadblocks, either resolving conflict situations (discussed earlier) or confirming the accuracy of the translation. This was particularly common if the interpreter was inexperienced in general, or had to deal with a new topic involving unknown terminology:

> … if there is a new topic for me like leasing contracts or something like … and after talks I was in the car and I asked if I understood the speaker right – describing him some things that I have translated – just for myself, just I don't know I would need it for my future experience. But when I just started working and if I see – if the speaker I work for is communicative enough, I used to ask them if my translation was good or how he felt when I was translating, but I don't do it anymore (6)

Terminological discussions were also possible in post-interpretation talk. Apart from those discussions, two other topics were common in the conversation between the clients and the interpreter after the interpretation.

These conversations usually occurred once the formal interpretation has clearly ended, and the parties were off the stage, or out of the negotiation room, or in the car on

their way to the next stop in the itinerary, and usually just with one party present. One of the two topics was "people talk":

> … it is a discussion of what has been said, not a discussion of translation issues – you know people like to discuss people – it is normally people talk – so people say, do you think he was odd, do you think he was – he meant what he said (7)

People talk was part of a natural need to evaluate the interaction during interpretation, to make sense of what has happened.

The second topic of post interpretation conversations was also related to sensemaking and dealt with process talk: evaluating the interpreters work, discussing the progress of the negotiations, and bringing closure to the interaction. Usually the clients were "the first to start" (14) evaluation talk – they would compliment the interpreter on their work and "give them feedback without asking" (14). Had the interpreter initiated the work quality discussion, it could have been seen as "asking for a compliment" (15). Interpreting quality talk could be as simple as an exchange of pleasantries; but it could also help resolve "technological issues" and even help create a sense of "partnership" (19).

In the case that the interpreter has worked on the project for a long time, he or she could also give input about the topic of discussion itself – sometimes the interpreter had a better understanding of the project at large through working on it for a long time and could give valuable advice to the team members working on the project – it could be about "business culture" (3), about "correcting misunderstandings" and "avoiding inconveniences" (9), or about ways to avoid potential pitfalls in the future (24).

Finally, post interpretation talk could simply be about terminating the interaction, without any in-depth discussion – a simple confirmation that both sides are happy with how the process went and that they have no further claims on each other's time:

> Sometimes when I start to talk to the other party, trying to define exactly some term or some thing – I explain to my party, the Russian people so what I was discussing, to keep them aware what is going on. But not later, not after the negotiations – no we just say goodbye and go home (29)

When I discussed the advice timing with the interpreters, the theme that became very prominent was about the separation of formal work and informal interaction – being on stage and being yourself. This was noticeable especially in the discussions of the post interpretation talk:

> After talk… this is not the job anymore, this is when you become yourself (7)
>
> … as soon as it is understood that he or she is not interpreting any more, sure, sure – he or she is allowed to have an opinion (12)
>
> … if the people ask you to give your opinion about this situation, what you really think, outside the framework of the business conversation, or any other official talk, then of course it is OK, we are people, why shouldn't we share opinions but if you and me are in an official situation, and we are busy working, you are busy talking and I am interpreting you then nobody cares for my opinion (17)

From this standpoint, the interpreters who were willing to give advice and get involved *during* the interaction were willing to mix up the personal and professional lives, being

themselves and being on stage. Their thoughts on invisibility will help understand why this may have been the case.

Personal involvement: Definitions of invisibility

Originally, I was not planning to discuss invisibility directly but to use several lead questions to get to the topic. But in the very first interview the respondent gave me a statement that she heard many times during her student years: "A good interpreter should be invisible". So in all subsequent interviews I asked the interpreters to give me their reaction to this statement – whether they agreed with it and how they understood it. As they explained their understanding of the statement, it became apparent that invisibility means very different things to different people, and just asking them to agree or disagree with the phrase was pointless. My task then morphed into classifying their definitions of invisibility before recording their opinions about it.

In my theoretical discussion, I described two definitions of invisibility – one based on Venuti's (1992, 1998) work and one based on Angelelli's (2004). In the former case, it is seen as lack of prestige and recognition for the interpreting profession; in the latter, as an ethic on noninvolvement and personal detachment. Predictably, not a single interviewee interpreted invisibility in Venuti's global terms; the more interesting finding was the range of deviations from Angelelli's definition.

Overall, while the academic treatment of invisibility proposed by Angelelli is more concerned with the global issues – the politics and power issues and the overall impact of interpreter involvement on the interpretation process, the interviewees understandably treated invisibility as a more local, immediate, situated, pragmatic

phenomenon and looked at it from a position within the interpreting process rather than the more abstract and removed position beyond it.

Most of them described invisibility as creating an illusion of direct communication, so that the participants “have the impression that they are talking to each other” (10) and “don’t even notice that the interpreter is there” (26):

> … the aim of the interpreter is to elminate the language barrier, and when you elminate the language barrier, you perhaps disappear together with the barrier so the interpreter of course doesn't have to attract any attention to his or her person (3)

So what behaviors can one employ for such self-effacement? First, it was all about "keeping a low profile" and "not dragging attention to your personality" (11). A low profile could be achieved in a variety of ways. There were several nonverbal charasteristics to keep in mind: wearing elegant yet unconspicuous clothing, avoding bright colors and exaggerated makeup, standing behind the speaker and never taking center stage positions, keeping gesticulation to a minimum – you are there to "facilitate the discussion, not to decorate the discussion" (24), participating in the show but "never taking the center stage" (25). The interpreter also had to match the tempo, inonation, and the emotional register of the speech – self-effacement wasn't about speaking in a monotonous lifeless voice with flat intonation, it was rather about not bringing any intonations of your own and staying as close as possible to the characteristics of the speaker. Rendering a dull speech in a lively entertaining tone was unacceptable; so was delivering emotional or humorous content in a flat key because such interpretation would be equal to "losing content" (19).

To achieve a low profile and become invisible, the interpreter obviously needed to forget about his or her emotions and turn into a transfer device devoid of personal communicative intentions:

> …there shouldn't be a personality out there, there should be an incredibly thin, and incredibly sensitive device in which you become – your ears, your mind, your memory, your tongue… you try to get as much of the irony, of sarcasm, of sadness, of emotion, besides the actual meaning of what the person is talking about and try to get it into another language as precise as you can, but that is all that you are about, not adding any of your own sarcasm or irony, any of your attitude (7)

Invisibility was about being "discreet" (12). If discreetness was impossible – for example if the content of translation was causing a strong personal reaction for the interpreter, best efforts had to be made to conceal those "extra emotions" (8) by a variety of methods, such as avoiding eye contact with the client.

If the interpreter was experienced enough to reach this state of self-effacement and achieve it effortlessly with "eyes and ears open" and without "creating an impression of being tense" (13), there was a possibility of creating what was almost "an altered state of mind" (30). It was described as something "beautiful" and "enjoyable" (22), similar to "a ritual or a rock concert" (30) or to surfing the waves (23), with "some magic to it" (26). It was described in terms reminiscent of Csikszentmihalyi's flow (1974, 1975)[41]. In fact, two interviews used the word *flow* themselves to describe this state. In the rare moments when flow happened, the time flew by and everything went well – the interpreter was at "the peak of the performance" (30) and felt at one with the situation:

> … for example – operating a vehicle – that is what I am doing now – it means that I am – I consider myself as an integral part of my vehicle – of my car and the same thing can be applied – or applies when you are operating for example the air jet – it means that when you are taking off you are once again – feel – you have the feeling that you are the integral part, you are one of the mechanisms – very important one – the same thing – I have nothing against working with some clients where I am actually enjoying the work – it is beautiful (22)

Flow was "like a drug" that "distracted you from your problems completely" (23) – but the moment the awareness of one's performance re-appeared, the flow stopped:

> …in the process if I suddenly started to think that oh wow I am really good and I am really cool – and at the very moment I lose the train of thought completely (23)

One could not simultaneously experience flow and analyze it – it was best to treat this experience as something incomprehensible, almost supernatural:

> …you are working, you are reaching it and then hop! it is all gone, because of some external factor, so this is where the art comes in, I know everything about airplanes but who knows how this iron thing is flying (laughs). So you know I understand the physics of the flight, but still there is some magic about it – the same with translation or interpretation (26)

When describing good interpreting as flow, the interviewees also mentioned that such flow – and in turn, invisibility – was hard to achieve. Achieving it, then, was a mark of professionalism, and was possible only with sufficient experience. Several interpreters

mentioned that the biggest compliment for them was to be unnoticed – to translate so effortlessly and flawlessly that the parties would forget about the existence – and treat them as if they weren't there. One person described a situation when a client walked out of the negotiation room on the concluding day of negotiations, personally talked to and thanked everyone involved in the process, and then turned around and left without saying a word to the interpreter:

> … he didn't say goodbye to me, and I really felt it was a compliment to my job that he did not kind of feel that there was somebody in between. Later on his secretary phoned on their way to the airport and she put him on the phone and he apologized for not saying goodbye to me – but I said that I saw it was coming because I saw how he looked – he didn't look at me, he was looking in the eyes of those people to whom he communicated, he just listened to my voice, and I said that it was the highest compliment to my job that he felt so connected with these people that he didn't feel the converting device (11)

Several other interpreters noted a similar thing – when the clients stopped looking at them and instead addressed each other directly, it was a sign that the interpretation was done well.

Since invisibility was hard to achieve and required professionalism and an appropriate state of mind, it was more accurate to talk about the *degree* of invisibility and treat it as a continuum rather than approach it as an absolute that is either present or completely absent:

> … I think I can only see the degrees of invisibility, of course it is very difficult to judge by yourself in your own work but of course you can compare

> various assignments and of course you can see where the communication was smooth and where the parties were satisfied and joking and understanding each other and of course when people start involving humor, maybe they have established good contact – so I can't say I have the experience of being completely invisible but I can say that I was attaining some good degree of invisibility (3)

Given that it was more appropriate to treat invisibility as continuum, one should not ask if invisibility is good or bad for an interpreter. Rather, one must ask what degree of invisibility is necessary and on what situational factors does this requirement depend. The interviewees' input on this matter is presented in the next section.

Personal involvement: Advantages and disadvantages of invisibility

When the respondents were asked to respond to the statement that a good interpreter should be invisible, an overwhelming majority agreed with that statement at least to a degree; several people were even ready to agree with it unconditionally, without reservations. Invisibility was the "golden rule" (15) of the profession – a principle that the interpreters heard repeatedly during their university years, an ideal heralded by the Russian (Soviet) translator education system:

> … for five years, during which I was studying at the department of translation and interpretation we were – that particular statement was repeated to us constantly – that an interpreter, a good interpreter should be invisible – the best compliment that an interpreter can receive is if they don't even notice you while you are translating so to an extent it is implanted into my education, yeah – so I am trying to achieve this – in my job as well (15)

The dogma of the student years was often reinforced by personal experience, with several seasoned interpreters reporting that they have grown to agree with the ideal of invisibility even more over the years – that the interpreter was to be a "reflection and that's all" (5). In retrospect, they regretted the cases when they didn't abide by this ideal:

> I now learned to control myself better … at one point I was in quite an awkward situation… we were at the reception hosted by the government of [a region in Northern Russia] and the Governor brought us all in in a room with quite a meal laid for us and he was obviously very proud of himself and of the meal and he says, everything that you see on this table was produced in the region – and there was a huge pineapple in the middle of the table … I think I actually said, особенно ананас [especially the pineapple] (2)

However, simultaneously with the awareness that invisibility was a worthy ideal, interpreters also grew exceedingly conscious that invisibility was just that – an ideal, something that is "just academical" (2), unattainable in its perfectionist completeness and sometimes even undesirable in an absolute form. Partly this was because the interpreter was an indispensable "part of the process" (4) that couldn't be entirely removed personally, and partly because in some cases complete invisibility was counterproductive.

First, the ideal was not defensible in its extreme form – you are still there, "people are still looking at you" (25) – had you been completely invisible, "nobody would know that you are the interpreter" (14). Second, invisibility was more of an issue in very formal, high level negotiations (perhaps because it was part of the mechanism used to foster an impression of transparency and legitimacy that is so valuable in a political

context); in less formal contexts where the interpreter was almost a "team member", high levels of it would be detrimental:

> … in very official, in very formal situations, the interpreter should be invisible, but if he is part of the team – let's say if I am interpreting to business people and I have been with them for quite a long while, right and I know the situation and that – I become part of the team, and in this particular case, or cases – right – I am not necessarily invisible, cause I may add something (28)

The interpreters also had a hard time staying invisible in conflict situations when they forced to take an active part in resolving and releasing tension. It was also hard for a female interpreter to remain inconspicuous when she was in a room full of males and inevitably drew attention. Also the ability to efface oneself was dependent on the interpreter's character traits – some people who were "too emotional… would be emotional in any case" (14). For charismatic people, it was hard to completely hide their charms. But it ultimately also depended on the will of the client – how formal or informal they wanted to be, if they "wanted to see their clone beside them" (30) or not. When a clone was wanted, some interpreters thought that this requirement precluded the forming of a firm interpersonal bond between the interpreter and the client, and without such a "working relation" (22) the risk of a low quality translation was increased.

Overall, the interviewees agreed about two things when it came to invisibility. First, it was a worthy ideal presented as part of translator education and proven by experience. Second, it was just an ideal, a rule to be followed, but without illusions that this state can become permanent and absolute. The paradox was that invisibility was theoretically desirable but practically impossible:

> …you know you have to be invisible, you will always be visible because unless you sit in a booth and then nobody sees you, but you will always be visible because everybody is looking at you when you speak and not at the – and then looking at the person who speaks, you know, your principal so – you can't be invisible, but in an abstract sense you have to be – you have to be invisible – you have to – you can never – you should never become center stage really (25)

The interpreters continuously strived to reconcile this paradox by adhering to the theoretical standard as much as possible, but at the same time getting involved when the situation required it.

In the discussions of visibility, three corollary themes arose that invited in-depth investigation and promised to shed more light on how the interpreters resolved the invisibility paradox and what factors influenced the latitude of their movement between the ideal of invisibility and the reality of not being able to attain it. First, such latitude and flexibility was necessary because interpretation was a dynamic, unpredictable process, where thinking on your feet was more important at times than the uncompromising following of the rules. Second, the requirement of invisibility and a lack of active agency could make some interpreters frustrated and drained, making the work repetitive and tiring. Third, just like some interpreters were charismatic and couldn't conceal it, some clients were also attractive and interpreters occasionally got attached to them on the interpersonal level, making it impossible to remain completely uninvolved. These three topics are discussed in the following sections. I will deal with attachment and fatigue first

because they can be at times the two sides of the same coin, and save the spontaneity for last.

Personal involvement: Being a shadow

Discussing exhaustion from work wasn't part of the original interview plan; but it was brought up by an experienced interpreter in one of the first interviews:

> … interpreter's work is just to repeat somebody's work mainly… sometimes the interpreters who are older who have been working for 10-15 years and they get tired of just repeating somebody's words, they switch, they do some other job, because it can be boring, because everybody needs to – I don't know to – realize their – something they have inside (6)

So in subsequent interviews I asked the respondents if interpreting was tiring – primarily because you don't have to have an active stance and must repeat other people's thoughts. I decided to include this question because it was related to involvement and invisibility and provided an additional indirect way to probe these important topics.

The answers here were divided and depended on the interpreter's personality and approach to translating. Some of them indeed believed that the job was tiring, even exhausting:

> …if you don't have any breaks throughout the session of three or four hours then you feel completely exhausted because you channel the thoughts of one man to another… you turn into a machine, you start repeating yourself, your mind is not flexible and you cannot even sometimes express the simplest of ideas so sometimes it gets really tiring (15)

The continuous need for the "concentration of attention" and having to speak "twice more than the others" (17) made the job emotionally and physically draining. After many hours on the job, the interpreter had a hard time relaxing and not focusing attention on anything:

> When you are shadowing it is tiresome, you need some rest… you just start hating everyone at the end of the evening (17)

The work became even more difficult when the need for concentration was almost constant, such as in the case of traveling with the client to a foreign country and performing the duties of a guide and service personnel on top of the linguistic duties (28). Sometimes at the end of the day the interpreter even needed to let out steam:

> … it can be not an easy day when people are quarreling, and even shouting to each other, and you like a piece of rubber, absorbing shocks, from both sides, then I come home and I start just some computer game sort of Diablo II or something like that to just get this relief, otherwise I would quarrel also with my man and of course it would do no good (24)

So for some interpreters the job was indeed draining, and made them feel like a shadow of the speaker, devoid of personal will or any possibility of self-determination. For one interpreter, this was reason enough to consider giving up the job and start looking for a different career; others looked for workarounds, such as having a double career:

> … if you just work as a translator and as an interpreter you might feel [like a shadow], and that's why I chose a sort of a double career – an academic career where I create things – where I am the author and an interpreter I create something but mostly my job is to help others to create something together…

> that is why – I think I chose consciously interpretation, translation, not as my first job (25)

Yet many did not need any workarounds because for them the job may have been tiring physically, but reinvigorating and rewarding emotionally. The physical demands of the job explained why you "don't see old interpreters" (14).

For the people who found it rewarding, sometimes the tediousness of the job was compensated for by access to new people and new locations through the ever-changing projects. Sometimes the interpreters treated their work as acting, as a performance, and derived pleasure from playing their part well and constantly improving their linguistic skills (21):

> ... even if sometimes I think I am like a shadow I find it even a bit exciting because it is – there is a bit of acting involved… and also for me translation – primarily is language, so I enjoy the process of translation so much that this is what gives me real pleasure, I don't even think of being a shadow of somebody else (8)

Sometimes, it was liberating not to have the responsibility for coming up with the speech content, because the "construction of the phrase was already done by somebody else" (11).

Several people noted that to enjoy the job and to avoid feeling a shadow, one needed a degree of humbleness and a natural predilection to be lead rather than to lead. Such an approach was particularly problematic for some males, who had a hard time submitting their macho ambitions to anybody's will. In the words of one female interpreter,

> It is not draining I would say, it of course depends on each particular interpreter – depends on his approach to his work, to his job – I like acting – performing – but I don't think that I am losing my personality… I am not feminist, don't get me wrong, but I think this is more problem of men interpreters – it is like a psychological feature of male nature – because I don't think that it is bad to repeat after somebody, to act like him – because anyway somewhere inside, deep inside I remain myself, so it doesn't drain me – maybe sometimes after many many hours of interpretation you are exhausted physically – your tongue and throat, but not your mind, my mind is clear – I feel myself (29)

Finally, two interpreters didn't need an antidote from feeling like a shadow because they understood that they possessed more power than the clients perceived them to have, even when they were translating as accurately as possible and didn't intervene in any overt way:

> The fact that translating or interpreting is shadowing somebody else's voice is the very reason why I chose that profession, I feel that it is quite resting, and I like to follow the line that is provided to me – however I would really say that in that process we translators or interpreters have a LOT of decisions to make, and we make many decisions in the way we translate what we are provided… I find this power of making decisions, because it is not known or understood, all the more powerful (12)

At times a demonstration of this hidden power was all that the interpreters needed to show their value and to feel good about themselves:

> … they are useless without you – if they consider you a shadow, give me just five minutes and they will understand that they can be nothing without you, and you have to be very proud about this – everyone's has his own worth… if the client is not very professional and is considering you as some kind of addition or annex – OK, there will be a lot of situations where actually you can see that he is nothing (22)

So while some interpreters agreed that the job was draining (and most admitted that it was very demanding physically), the majority found more positive aspects in it – it gave them access to new places, taught them new things, liberated them from the responsibility of constructing discourse, and allowed them to enjoy a theatrical performance that they themselves staged and directed.

The question of shadowing, of getting drained by the job, is about the distance one is willing to keep between the personal and professional life. The respondents who enjoyed the job achieved that by separating their inner self from the overt performance that they presented while interpreting. Those who failed to make this demarcation often experienced burnout.

Personal involvement: Getting attached

Personal attachment to clients is an issue related to invisibility in general and to shadowing in particular because it also deals with the choice of keeping your professional and personal lives separate (by not getting any personal attachment to clients) or mixing them up (by getting attached to them).

Like the question about shadowing, this discussion was prompted by an early interview and added to the original list of questions. Most interpreters agreed that this

was a mixed blessing – it could help you because your client became more predictable, both psychologically and linguistically, and was a lot more pleasant to work with – but at the same time it could become detrimental to the job if it went too far.

Warm feelings towards the clients were more likely in the beginning of one's interpreting career. It was common to have fond memories of one's "first group" (7) but with experience the interpreters learned to switch effortlessly "from one topic to another, from one client to another" (6) and realized that it was necessary to be involved and focused, but not imperative to be emotionally attached to the clients.

The main advantage of such an attachment, were it to form, was the positive atmosphere that it created between the interpreter and the client. It made the job less tiring which was important when the project went for "8 hours a day, 5 days a week" (19). Also, it allowed the interpreter to get used to the client's "manner of talk" (17) which in turn made it easier "to detect the intent of the speaker" (12) and deliver a higher quality translation.

Aside from providing motivation, attachment could also be useful in that an interpreter's work contact could grow into personal contacts. Sometimes this would result in a lasting friendship or even romantic involvement, especially with "charming people" (23):

> … it happens sometimes to the translators that you just really get close or attached to somebody … there was a man I was really very close to get him married, so now I am happy that it didn't happen … actually everything was not so bad but he lived in New Zealand so you can imagine how far away it was from Russia (18)

So while most interpreters agreed that attachment was helpful, and that if the interpreter behaved in accordance with professional ethics it was irrelevant if the client was "a friend or a foe" (23), they also believed that getting too close to clients was treading on thin ice and the situation could slip beyond control, so it was best to avoid attachments or make an effort to clearly separate work and personal life.

Attachments could become detrimental if personal liking made the interpreter willing to "start paraphrasing or concealing information" (23). Also, the interpreter always had to remember that he or she was working for both sides and they needed to be given equal attention. Attachments threatened this balance and made the other side suspicious of the whole situation and of the interpreter's loyalty (24). In those cases, it was best to postpone personal friendly discussion until the work was complete and only one party, one client, was present. Finally, attachments could be harmful to the objects of the warm feelings as well – in many cases it was the client who initiated the friendly contact, but the interpreter had to remember that in the client's eyes he or she was a hero, a guide to "a wild country" (21), a person that they were completely dependent on. The interpreter had a duty not to abuse this trust:

> You have to watch it … it's similar to nurse-patient relations … if you are helping people, they are so grateful – not speaking the language of their partners they also feel dependent on you, and they kind of learn to trust you otherwise their business would not go forward – and you just have to understand the psychological situation, and be prepared to see the consequences if you emotionally attach to people (11)

So the interpreter had to find a balance between getting too close and causing harm for all parties involved or moving too far away and destroying a positive working environment. Time and time again, the same theme arose behind this discussion, as well as several others reviewed earlier – it all depends, there are no standards to be followed blindly, and each interpreting situation requires the interpreters to use their own judgment in how they behave. This spontaneous nature of the process was an important topic in and of itself but it also helped explain another area closely related to invisibility and involvement, the topic of interpreter's inventions.

Personal involvement: Spontaneity and invention

The spontaneous, unpredictable nature of interpreting as a practice lead many respondents to welcome and value resourcefulness – thinking quickly and solving problems as they arose, even if the methods for such solutions did not comply a hundred percent with academic standards and codes of behavior. The ability to handle difficult and emergency situations was seen as one of the key skills of a successful interpreter.

The need for "on the spot" (1) decision making set interpreting apart from written translation. In interpreting something "could always go wrong" (1); the situations changed dynamically and unpredictably depending on a variety of external and internal factors, like the participants' mood or weather (26). The interpreter had to have "good prediction skills" (24) and to be constantly monitoring the situation for potential disruptions. This need increased the already heavy cognitive load that the interpreter had to deal with[42].

So the interpreter had to be attentive, resourceful, and clever[43]. In a difficult situation, it was more important "to find a way out" and think fast, do "whatever came to

mind first" (26) rather than disrupt communication. The respondents gave me several examples of such crises; in all the cases they used inventions to avoid problems.

The best story about an interpreting emergency and about an invention that resolved it was given to me in the eleventh interview and I used it in the following conversations as a lead-in to the topic of interpreter inventions:

> … it was an incentive party for a big store… so representatives of these fashion brands were giving short speeches… everybody spoke English, except for one gentleman who spoke in Italian. And then he looks at me and I was supposed to translate it. See there were two sentences and I made it up – because it was just this environment and I was downstairs with this mike – they were on the stage in the spotlight and there was no way of me to communicate to the gentleman to say that I don't know Italian plus everybody was already in a happy mood and I became bold all of a sudden so I said something about beautiful ladies of Saint Petersburg, blah blah blah, also two phrases, and he looked happy that he didn't have to speak English… and the audience was also happy (11)

This was "a very, very drastic example" (19) of a crisis that required intervention; but it helped solicit responses about the topic of invention in general.

Most interpreters agreed that invention was their last resort; it was warranted only if legitimate ways of resolution were not available. Such extreme cases included textbook examples of culture specific humor or neologisms. A joke could be replaced with an equivalent joke in the target language[44] that "would ring a bell" for the client – what was important was "the final result" (13), not verbatim rendering. A new technology term

describing a newly invented phenomenon had to be replaced with a descriptive phrase because no equivalent existed yet in the target language (23).

Neologisms and humor are textbook examples of situations requiring intervention; it was more interesting to listen to the respondents' thoughts about other types of situations. One such common type was avoiding disruptions. The drastic example about a greeting in Italian cited earlier fits into this category. Inventions also were the only way out when one of the parties was rude or inappropriate and the other party could be offended by a direct translation, such as in this illustration involving two clients, a male and a female:

> … they started talking to each other, she asked many questions and smiled and the further she continued to ask questions the more this man understood that she was smart, and he told me just in front of her – "oh, she is not that stupid as I thought" and she asks me "what did he say?" You know I didn't know what to say but I invented something, I invented something that he liked the conference, he liked the food, everything, but I couldn't interpret the phrase that he just gave me (15)

Other interpreters agreed that it was best to avoid disruptions, invent a milder (20), more general statement (23, 24), or avoid translation altogether by stating that this was a procedural statement for the interpreter's attention only and the other party didn't need to worry about it (30). Such situations required particular resourcefulness on the part of the interpreter if the speaker's facial expression and gestures were telltale about his or her true communicative intentions (27). Potential disruptions were a concern when the speaker spoke too fast, or with a strong peculiar accent, or moved away from the mike.

One interpreter described a difficult scenario of translating for a group of elderly Scottish gentlemen who spoke quickly and almost unintelligibly for her so that she had "to invent half of the story " (28); given the circumstances, she felt that was a better way out than "doing nothing" and staying silent.

However, even though most interpreters agreed that sometimes inventions were inevitable, they also stressed that this "interpreter's trick" (28) should be the last resort rather than a commonly used tool – "it shouldn't be like *Life is beautiful*"[45] (19). Only a veritable crisis – if the parties were "about to start shooting each other" (25) warranted its use. Before resorting to inventions, the interpreter had to ask for clarifications – ask for the sentence to be repeated or openly admit to not knowing a certain word. In the case of the Italian greeting, possible solutions included asking if anybody in the audience spoke Italian, asking the speaker if he knew English, apologizing for not translating the message and openly admitting to not being fluent in Italian, or using one's knowledge of similar languages to make an educated guess about the contents of the speech and presenting the translation with a qualifier that it was just a guess.

There was only one point on which the interpreters were clearly unanimous – it was never acceptable to use inventions to cover up the interpreter's incompetence. Such unprofessional behavior was not to be tolerated by other interpreters. Sophisticated clients were also aware of the inexperienced interpreter's proneness to hiding the lacunas in their education. These clients would rather have an interpreter willing to ask clarifications then one that pretended to never need any:

> … those who understand about interpreting – these are people who travel a lot, they in fact insist that the interpreter understand things. (11)

So inventions were a necessary evil, and it was in the interpreters' and clients' interests alike to keep them to a minimum and resort to them only when all else failed.

Two interpreters stated that they were not willing to condone inventions in any shape or form, under any circumstances; on the other end of the range, several respondents didn't see any problem with the complete manufacturing of two phrases in the Italian speech example. Most others allowed themselves latitude between the two extremes, and were ready to travel back and forth depending on the circumstances of a given situation and interpret the professional norms freely in situ rather than follow them blindly in abstraction.

The theme of such improvising combined with the movement between prescribed norms and real exigencies is a thread that comes through discussions of inventions; but it also a uniting thread that connects to the topic of invisibility in general. In fact, I found this theme to be my single most important finding in this study; and it is to this very theme I will turn in the last section of this work.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

Puissant je suis sans force et sans pouvoir,

Bien recueilli, débouté de chacun.

François Villon

Having described the topics covered in the interview in some detail, I will now directly relate my findings to the theoretical framework laid out in the opening chapters.

Monolingualism vs. bilingualism

As I have explained earlier, finding participants outside of Russia proved difficult, and impossible within a limited time frame that I had. Moreover, an overwhelming majority of the Russians interviewed came from central European regions of Russia and as a result grew up in a monolingual environment. Given the homogeneity of the sample in terms of monolingualism, I had no data to explore my proposal that monolingualism and bilingualism will have a profound impact on cultural identity. The only way to amend this loss is to conduct a new study and recruit participants outside of Russia in bilingual countries or areas, such as Switzerland or Québec.

Partly thanks to the monolingual upbringing and partly thanks to causes to be described later, the participants of the current study were also predominantly monocultural, with their identity centered around a single culture. This situation may again be described as a limitation of the sample; but it can also be seen as a finding that "multiculturalism", however politically desirable it may be, is not by any stretch the only possible solution to successful intercultural communication, its only logical development. The fact that these highly qualified professionals in intercultural communication have not embraced "multiculturalism" shows that even in the 21st century, "monoculturalism" is

still a viable option, allowing the individuals to be tolerant of others as well as adequately perform their professional duties.

This finding should also serve as a warning against transporting axiomatic assumptions about human communication from Western to non-Western environments. M.S. Kim (2002) has convincingly shown how problematic several key communication concepts become in non-Western cultures. She shows how negatively valued traits can be positive; for example, communication apprehension is seen in the West as a debilitating deficiency, preventing the speaker from achieving his or her full persuasive potential while in non-Western environments it may be seen as a positive behavior, a demonstration of politeness and deference. The results of this study suggest that multiculturalism may be another one of those concepts that don't export easily.

Linguistic and cultural competence

I estimated the interpreters' linguistic and cultural competence by observation as well as self-report. Besides asking the participants if they possesed these two qualities, I also asked them if it was important for interpreters in general to have them.

The overwhelming majority of the participants knew their working language at the level approaching or in some aspects even exceeding that of a native speaker. This was the case despite the fact that most of them had no certification, which to this day is not an integral part of the Russian interpreting industry. They had no doubts that linguistic competence was essential for the profession.

The cultural competence was seen as an essential skill by far fewer participants; some even believed that it was detrimental to the profession to have it. Moreover, they clearly separated competence as knowledge from competence as behavior. While they

agree that having knowledge of the culture of the working language was definitely an advantage, behaving like a local was not necessary. The knowledge could only be welcomed if linguistic skills were already adequate; it was an added bonus, but not an essential requirement.

So most interpreters possessed more than sufficient linguistic competence and adequate cultural competence. The latter was difficult to estimate by observation; it could only be measured indirectly – for example, many interpreters lacked some pragmatic skills such as knowledge of colloquialisms and popular culture referents; but these lacunae were hardly debilitating for their work. Given that the requirement of linguistic and cultural competence was fulfilled, the next step was to find out if this competence lead to identification with the speech communities of the languages they worked with.

Cultural identity: Identity types

Concerning my classification of possible identity types, the majority of respondents did make claims that fitted the proposed theory; but only one of the proposed four types was prominently present. There were many people whose identity was centered around one speech community (most often the native community), and people who claimed that despite their loyalty to home, their had a wider appreciation for the foreign, following a pattern of a hero's journey that I have described early on.

However, the the majority of them reported feeling monocultural, despite their exposure to other cultures through their work. Contrary to my expectations, they saw interpreting as similar to other professions, and not unique in way. Work changed their identity in that they now belonged to a professional community, just like doctors

belonged to a medical community and marines to a military one; but it was not necessarily accompanied by a change in their cultural identity.

Cultural identity: Value conflicts

I expected to find that identification with multiple speech communities could lead to value conflicts. I found very little support for this claim. No other topic has caused more puzzled pauses and requests for clarification from the participants than this one. Many respondents have claimed to not even grasp the concept; still others said they understood the idea, but had no firsthand experience with it. I believe that there are several possible explanations for this.

First, in my predominantly monolingual and monocultural sample, there was no identification with multiple speech communities. For the majority of my participants, cultural identity was centered around their home speech community, and any potential conflict with "foreign" values invariably lead to the dominance of home values because they formed the core of the participant's identity. Moreover, the participants could stay in the monocultural world because their work usually didn't require a prolonged immersion in a foreign environment, that would encompass both their professional and personal lives. An interpreter is rarely taken out of the familiar element for long enough to feel this conflict. Moreover, there is usually an option of falling back on the home environment when necessary. After a day on the job, the interpreter usually returns to the comfort of the home – both literally and culturally. It is not unlike diving and staying under water for a short period of time. There is no pressure to develop gills unless you decide to settle down on the ocean floor.

This first explanation is specific to my study; but there are several other explanations that would likely apply to broader contexts. The second explanation applies not only to my sample but to interpreting situations where the English language is involved. The clash doesn't happen because the language used is English – the language of international communication that has lost the cultural bearings and its linguistic components can be learned in relative isolation from the cultural components (Crystal, 2003; Görlach, 2002) – especially when translating for people for whom it is not their native language.

So the cultural influence of the English language is diluted by its status as an international lingua franca and a cultural detachment resulting from it. The two interpreters in my sample that worked with German were distinctly different from the English interpreters: they had a readily accessible German identity to adopt, more defined and solid than the amorphous cultural image embodied in the English language. Even one of the English interpreters noted the difference in her observations of interpreter teams:

> … knowing additional languages influences a man much and I even see it – you know in our English translators team it is not so evident, we usually translate as I mentioned before non-natives and as to our German translators team and specifically our Roman translators team it is a sort of mimicry – they a little bit behave like Italian people for example – they are emotional as French, as Italian and they have the ways of dressing and ways of talking even Russian language in this way – of course I am exaggerating a little but with our German team it is the same – yeah, some of them start looking like and behaving like Germans (24)

The German interpreters themselves reported a similar "mimicry" (21).

The English interpreter quoted above correctly identifies the cause of the difference between interpreters working with English and those working with other languages. The English interpreters very often work with non-native speakers. Quite tellingly, the only large company in my sample that had its own translation bureau of 60 employees provided direct translation services only for English, German, French, Italian, Chinese, and Japanese – all the other languages were cross-processed through English. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this situation is typical of the Russian translation and interpreting industry in general.

Besides the two context-dependent explanations – one-sidedness of my sample and the peculiarities of the English language – there were three more that would apply to an even wider range of situations.

The third explanation concerns the interpreter's personality type. Judging by the few responses of the interviewees who admitted to having experienced such conflict, and by my own personal experience, it takes a predisposition for self-reflection and a low tolerance for ambiguity to engage in such behavior. Real life interpreters are far less reflexive about these processes. They don't engage in nearly as much introspection as communication researchers. Sometimes they simply don't have time for it; but most of the time they don't have to engage in soul searching behavior – it is far less demanding to treat interpreting as a job and keep professional and personal lives separated than to try to reconcile them.

The fourth explanation concerns the fluidity of identity. When placed in a foreign environment, the interpreters were able to effortlessly switch to local norms without

questioning them or comparing them to native norms, and then as easily switch back to home norms upon returning to their native country. One of the respondents summed up this situation in her description of her behavior while in the country where her working language is spoken:

> … when I go to Germany I don't want to break any rules – I don't want to cross the street if the light is red, all of a sudden I feel the urge to buckle in – which is something we never have here [in Russia] (21)

Another interpreter described a similar experience during her trip abroad:

> …when I was in Netherlands it was funny how after a family dinner everybody would check if there is any food left on the table or if there is any wine left and everybody would try to pack it up, not to leave it in the restaurant on the table because it is paid for; and any wine should be finished, anything should be taken with and well – after a week in this – well protestant culture, where every little bit of food is valued you get appreciation to that rule, it doesn't seem strange to you – so yes you pick up all the bread that was left on the table along with the rest of the people and you take it home and you feel good, it feels nice. In Russia you probably wouldn't do that – you would leave bread on the table (7)

When placed back in their native environments the interpreters would go back to the old ways.

But the fifth and the most important explanation is that the chain of subversive influence that a foreign language has on a person's values is broken or weakened when that person perceives the language as just a tool of his or her trade and separates that

trade from the personal life. This separation serves as a defense mechanism. This ability to separate personal and professional lives is the single most important reason for the broken up link between competence and identification. One of the best explanations on how this is possible is provided by Erving Goffman (1959). I will discuss this explanation later – I will address the findings on personal involvement next because Goffman's ideas relate to invisibility as well.

Personal involvement: The role of the interpreter

I expected personal involvement to be dependent on cultural identity; but for reasons described above, such a connection was not evident in my study. Therefore, I must deal with personal involvement as an issue largely independent from identity. Once I describe personal involvement, I will come back to discussing this broken connection while also using Goffman's ideas to provide a theoretical explanation for it.

Interpreters' views of roles is a good entry point for a discussion of personal involvement. The majority of them defined their roles in conduit terms, using metaphors like microphone, telephone, or antenna. Their understanding of roles and metaphors was based on a passive relay device, that has the dual goals of accurate information transfer and intercultural understanding building.

The interpreters embraced views on invisibility similar to Angelelli's definition, but with significant deviations – they defined invisibility in immediate situational terms rather than abstract theoretical ones. They described it as creating an illusion of direct communication – the clients had to have the impression that they were talking directly to each other, without any linguistic mediation. The interpreters detected such situations when clients stopped looking at them and instead looked at each other while speaking.

Invisibility was achieved through self-effacement – first, being inconspicuous nonverbally (humble clothes, soft voice, even intonation); second, controlling involvement by "forgetting your emotions".

The conduit was the idealized description of the role; it was also the dogma during the university years of most interpreters, hammered into their brains. In subsequent discussions they explicitly and implicitly stated that it can only be approximated rather than completely attained. There were stages of invisibility; it was definitely seen as a continuum and not as a polarity.

As any end of a continuum, complete invisibility was an ideal, unattainable and sometimes counterproductive, theoretically desirable but practically impossible.

Fulfilling the ideal was not possible because interpreting was a dynamic, spontaneous process, and for it to be successful it occasionally required active rather than passive behavior from the interpreter. During those moments, the interpreter had to take the initiative in the process and become a cultural mediator or even an advocate. The notion of spontaneity as the determinant of the passive / active role is reminiscent of Avery's (2001) idea of incremental involvement – rather than seeing their role as passive or active, interpreters fluctuate between the two extremes depending on the demands of a particular situation.

Personal involvement: Types of involvement

So in general the interpreters' stance on invisibility was that of incremental involvement; I must now describe what kind of involvement was most likely to happen and what situations were most likely to trigger it.

The most frequent form of involvement was stylistic filtering; the more likely an unfiltered translation was to cause a conflict situation, the more likely it was to happen. Yet the interpreters varied in their readiness to engage in such filtering. Especially the more experienced participants were reluctant to engage in any editing, for various reasons – mostly because they believed it to be harmful for the parties involved, if not in the short run than potentially in the long run; or because they believed that the parties deserved to have an unmitigated conversation, with all of its occasional rough edges.

Even fewer participants, experienced and inexperienced alike, were willing to go beyond stylistic filtering and engage in active behaviors that could be classified as violations of professional ethics. Besides stylistic filtering, the only other form of involvement that most interpreters found acceptable was advice giving *outside* of the interpreting situation

Advice giving in general depended on the same factors as other forms of involvement; some respondents refused to provide any, citing reasons that people were sophisticated enough without additional information, or that they needed an unfiltered experience, however painful it may be. Those who did give advice usually did it before or after the interpreting itself, in this third space between being on the job and being off work, where their interactions with the client were still framed by the professional context, but where their role could be interpreted more liberally. In these in-between situations, they were now clearly speaking as individuals with their own voice, and the client was aware that this was the interpreter's opinion, rather than an interpretation of the other party's words. It is worth noting, too, that at this point usually only one client was present; and it was most likely the client paying for the interpretation.

Pre-interpretation advice was usually about the cultural aspects of the upcoming interaction; sometimes it was even formalized in the shape of a pre-departure orientation. Another popular topic was terminology and the scope of topics to be discussed; this was particularly likely if the interpreter was a novice in the area or if it was the first interaction of the interpreter and the client. Terminology could also become the topic of advice-related conversations *after* the interpretation. Other common post-interpretation topics were people talk and evaluation talk – discussing the participants of the interaction and the general success of it.

Most interpreters, even when giving advice in the in-between space, preferred to limit it to cultural mediation and procedural talk, and avoid advocacy roles. Just like few of them were willing to go beyond stylistic filtering, only a handful admitted that they would give advice *during* the interaction itself. Those ready to do it were willing to mix up the personal and professional lives, and erase the line between being at work and being off work.

In sum, the majority of participants limited personal involvement to stylistic filtering during the interaction and cultural mediation before or after the interaction. In some rare cases, they were willing to take on active advocate roles during the interaction as well.

Personal involvement: Factors determining the interpreters' roles

As the interpreters worked with the spontaneous, dynamic situations unfolding in front of them, they attempted to predict how the interactions would unfold; and if they saw it necessary, incrementally increase or decrease their involvement. What factors, then, determined these role changes?

There were three distinct factors. The first one was the perceived severity of the situation. The interpreter's job was to ensure the smooth flow of communication between the clients; if the situation escalated to a point that a disruptive conflict was to erupt, it was time to become more involved. However, the interpreters differed in their definitions of crises that warranted an involvement – while some would smoothen out even the slightest disruptions, others would get engaged only if the parties were at each other's throats.

The second factor was the formality of the context. The participants were exposed to the whole gamut of interpreting situations, from leading tours to country-leader level negotiations. At the highest level, deliberate active involvement was unthinkable; at the lowest level, where the interpreter's duties were often combined with those of a guide or a group leader, involvement was not only acceptable, but welcomed and encouraged. Some interpreters actually enjoyed work in very formal contexts, where they could turn into translating machines and pull their personality out of the interaction. It was liberating for them not to have to construct phrases and arguments, not to take sides – just to stay aloof and translate without filtering the content in any way. This shows that interpreters do not necessarily prefer an active role or seek it out. There are advantages for them in staying in the passive role as well.

Besides the general formality of the situation, the third deciding factor was the formality of the relationship between the interpreter and the client. Some interpreters were charismatic and couldn't conceal it, some clients were also attractive and interpreters occasionally got attached to them on the interpersonal level, making it impossible to remain completely uninvolved. Such attachments were more likely among

young interpreters who couldn't separate personal and professional lives. Many interpreters admitted that familiarity with the client made their job easier because the clients were easier to understand and to respect that way; but they had to be careful not to get too close, making either of the sides vulnerable and jeopardizing the whole interpreting enterprise.

Could these three factors be used as indicators that the interpreter is about to get involved? Could we use them to control the work of interpreters and ensure minimal involvement, striving for the conduit role? I believe the answer to this question is negative. Of all the parties involved, the interpreter is the only one with full access to the information on both sides; only the interpreter can accurately provide a continuous assessment of the situation. For example, had the parties been able to anticipate conflict situations, they would not need the mediation efforts from the interpreter in the first place. This is not unlike teaching the general public about the effect of advanced drugs. Without the skill needed to diagnose illnesses (that a professional doctor would have), this knowledge is of little use – the people would still not know what drug to administer in a particular situation.

Personal involvement: Summary

Overall, the interpreters views on personal involvement centered around three ideas. One, they saw the conduit role as an ideal, but at the same time as a paradox – it was a role to continually strive for, only never to be able to achieve it completely. Two, they fluctuated between the passive and active roles, incrementally adjusting their involvement, striving to find a balance in each case to minimize both disruptions and interventions. Their task could be described (paraphrasing Aristotle's famous definition

of rhetoric) as finding all available means of interpretation in every situation. Three, with experience came the reluctance to take on active roles – partially because as the interpreters advanced in their careers they worked in more formal contexts; partially because they knew staying out of work emotionally was a defense mechanism needed for long term survival.

The current study hasn't shed much light on the relationship between cultural identity and personal involvement for reasons discussed at length above. But it has added to our understanding of personal involvement by itself, by addressing a group of interpreters outside of the usual scope of similar studies. The experience of Russian interpreters shows that many concepts developed outside of Russia apply to them as well. For example, they follow the same principle of incremental involvement as their medical interpreter counterparts in the United States and Canada. At the same time, there are unique features to their experience, mainly due to the more lax regulations on interpreting industry, an almost complete absence of certification, and a more lenient legal climate. The current study shows a need for a comparative study of how Russian interpreters deal with personal involvement in opposition to the their Western counterparts. This study suggests that there are substantial differences; but it would be a more valid conclusion were it based on data from two samples, rather than a comparison of one samples to previous findings reported by other researchers.

Relating cultural identity and personal involvement

I have so far reviewed my findings on the two key topics of this study separately. I did not find the expected explicit connection between them in my data. I will now use Goffman's (1959) ideas to explain why this is the case.

I will use the theoretical framework presented by Erving Goffman (1959) in his *Presentation of self in everyday life*. Adapting Goffman to describe interpreting as an activity is certainly not new. Most notable adaptations are the studies by Roy (2000) and Waldensjö (1998, 2001). However, these authors have reacted to later Goffman's ideas rather than to his first book length publication. They have adapted theoretical frameworks that center around conversations and turn taking (Goffman, 1961, 1981). The dramaturgical approach put forth in *Presentation of self in everyday life* takes an approach of social psychology rather than conversation analysis; this approach, to the best of my knowledge, has not yet been used in studies of translation or interpretation.

From this perspective, interpreting is a performance given to an audience which in this case consists of the clients on both sides. The performance occurs in a formal ritualized setting, on frontstage, as opposed to backstage, the informal space where the performer is not burdened by the presence of the clients or the demands of the situation and can behave in a comfortable way suiting his or her needs rather than social expectations.

For an interpreter, the frontstage is the activity of interpreting itself; the backstage is being out of sight of the client. There is also a third in-between space – being with the client while not translating – such as riding with them in a car and discussing the previous conversation on the way to the next one. The more formal the context of interpreting, the higher the demands of the impossibility of backstage behaviors (such as relaxed posture, informal form of address, camaraderie between clients and interpreters) on frontstage and in the in-between stage.

The notion of invisibility and involvement can be explained in these terms as the distance between the frontstage and the backstage. This distance is determined by the interpreter and by the clients on a case to case basis. Situational factors determine the acceptability of backstage behaviors on frontstage. Several such factors come to mind based on the findings of this study.

First, there is the status of the interpreter. If he or she is treated as low-status service personnel, no backstage behavior at work is acceptable. If the interpreter is a team member and is accorded certain privileges and an equal status, relaxed backstage behavior (allowing involvement and visibility) is possible.

Second, there is the issue of personal attachment to clients. A presence of such an attachment may allow the interpreter to be more relaxed around the clients, if not during the interpretation itself, than in the in-between space that is neither frontstage nor backstage. Attachment is only possible if the interpreter is genuinely interested in the performance and believes in the value of the work that he or she is doing. If no such belief is present, the interpreter is more likely to treat clients as work contacts rather than personal contacts and to "use cynicism as a means of insulating their inner selves from contact with the audience" (Goffman, 1959, p. 20).

Third, there is the tension between professionalism and the need to provide counseling. Professional ethics prescribe frontstage behaviors only around the clients; real world needs sometimes dictate the necessity of backstage behaviors.

In this particular case, the shifting between frontstage and backstage behaviors is made possible by the nature of the Russian interpreting industry and the specifics of Russian culture in general. There is a lack of formal regulation in the industry (as

suggested by the absence of certification), no rigid legal system in place to enforce the following of the professional ethic of noninvolvement, and generally a more relaxed atmosphere with a shorter distance between the frontstage and the backstage. Such an environment encourages free shifting and the abundance of backstage behaviors on the frontstage. In my only interview with a Canadian interpreter, the differences were stark – there is a far more categorical adherence to the formal rules and an unwillingness to mix the personal and the professional.

In general, Goffman's ideas provide a wide range of option for the study of interpreting, especially of issues related to power and status, such as invisibility and involvement. I hope to employ them in my future studies on the topic.

Limitations and future directions

This study was designed to have an international sample of participants but ended up being a study of Russian interpreters only. Therein lie its strengths and weaknesses: it provides an in-depth treatment of the subject, but limits the scope of the questions that can be dealt with in this largely monocultural group. If the study were to be repeated with a more diverse group of subjects, some of these weaknesses could be amended (accompanied by an inevitable loss of some of its strengths, of course).

A predominantly Russian sample is limiting in several ways; I have already mentioned two. First, my monolingual and monocultural sample did not allow for a full study of different possible approaches to cultural identity. Second, it prevented me from making cross-cultural comparisons between my sample of Russian interpreters and the interpreters from other countries. Both of these limitations reveal a fundamental discrepancy between my original research plan that presupposed a more diverse

population and the necessarily reduced scope of the actual study that was executed, with the original plan truncated due to time constraints and logistic difficulties. The executed study must be seen as the first installment in executing the original plan and not its full fruition; were I to perform additional studies with other interpreter populations, it would strengthen my findings and allow for cross-cultural comparisons and a more exhaustive treatment of cultural identity.

There are other improvements that could be implemented with a group of respondents within Russia. Most importantly, that would involve an inclusion of interpreters whose main working language is not English. This will in turn require the interview to be conducted in Russian – this is not necessarily a problem, since the final report can be in Russian as well, or can be translated into other languages. Excluding English would allow to focus on languages where the link between language and culture has not been diluted as much by the effects of globalization as in the case of English.

Even with a very similar group of subjects – Russia-based interpreters working with English – the interview process can be improved by increasing the length of it. The topic is too complex to allow an in-depth coverage in a 45 minute interview. Increasing the length of the interview would make finding subjects more difficult since it would require a longer commitment on their part. It would also make it problematic to conduct such interviews over the phone due to fatigue. Long phone interviews can either be broken up into two or more sessions, or replaced with face-to-face ones. Ideally, these interviews should be combined with participant observations of interpreting encounters, as well as of the interpreter-clients interactions before and after the interpreting acts themselves.

Another very different possibility is using the results of this study to develop a questionnaire that can be distributed to a wider audience. Statistical analysis of the results could strengthen the findings of the current study or supplement similar future studies.

I also see a need to differentiate between the views currently popular in interpreting theory literature, stating that the interpreters are always involved, willingly or unwillingly, in the interpreting process, and the interpreters' self-reported impression, where they see themselves as largely uninvolved. This is not necessarily a contradiction: it is simply an admission that the interpreters genuinely strive to be uninvolved, but it is humanly impossible to be *completely* uninvolved. An interesting possibility for future studies would be to focus on the views on invisibility reported by others rather than rely on the self-report by the interpreters themselves like this study does. The ideal "others" would be the clients themselves – people who make frequent use of interpreting services.

Apart from procedural improvements, there are theoretical changes to consider in future studies. Goffman's dramaturgical metaphors highlight an important feature of interpreting as a practice – like acting, it is fluid, spontaneous, complex. Like any complex, holistic process, it is irreducible to its building blocks without a substantial destruction of the whole. It is a process that cannot be fully comprehended with simplistic dualist terms, such as visibility vs. invisibility, foreign vs. domestic, text vs. context.

In the interviews, (in)visibility was presented as a paradox – at once desirable and unattainable, non-existent in an absolute form, and secondary to the demands of the ever-changing, dynamic situation. The fluidity of the situation made it impossible to talk about it in binary, atomistic terms. These results reveal the inadequacy of binary explanations for an activity as complex as interpreting.

The prevalent approach to translation studies or translatology (*traductologie* in French) is based on linguistics, and inherits many assumptions of generalist and structuralist linguistics. Translation and interpreting studies as an independent discipline distance themselves from literary criticism and poetics in a pursuit of a science of translation (translato-logy). In doing so, they inevitably focus on the discontinuous in the language – words, signs, segments of text at the expense of the continuous – rhythm, flow, overall impression of the text and its historical surroundings (Meschonnic, 1999).

The study of the discontinuous invites structural, atomistic, reductionist approaches – breaking up texts into elements, comparing elements from different texts, compiling taxonomies, creating dichotomies, classifying, labeling. Such textual vivisection inevitably destroys the unity of the text, breaks it up into building blocks, and freezes it in time.

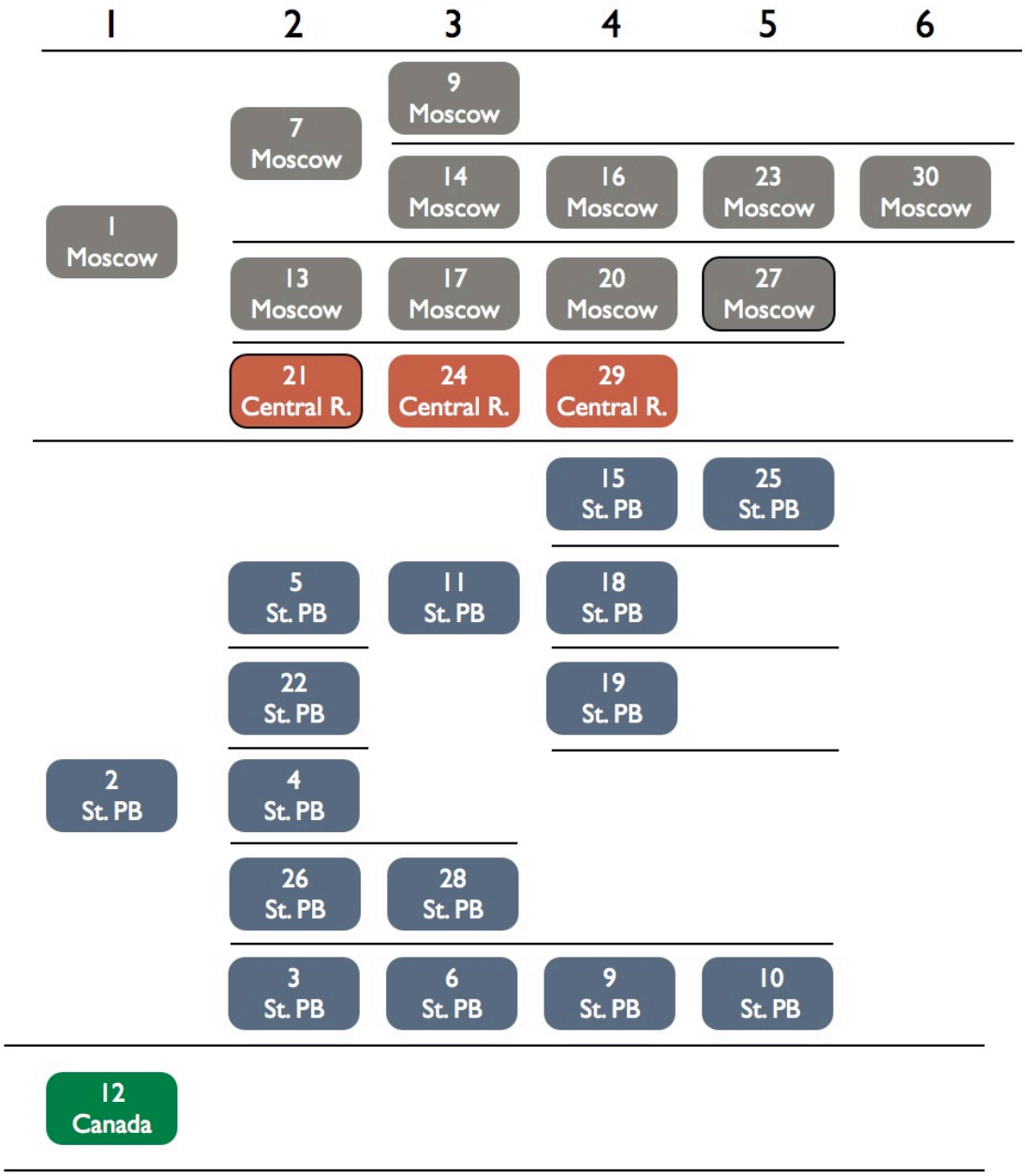
The study of the continuous in interpreting would not seek to classify translators into visible and invisible, involved and uninvolved, but would rather study the relationship between an interpreters ethics (a way to deal with visibility) and poetics (involvement).

My interview data support the idea that a study of the continuous in interpreting would be interesting and useful. My study was designed from a translatological, discontinuous viewpoint; I hope that my future work will also approach the question of the continuous, the poetics of translation (Meschonnic, 1999).

Figure 1

The six generations of interview contacts

Interviews conducted in Russian have a black border



Notes

[1] cited in Cronin, 2006, p. 1.

[2] This is reminiscent of Berman's (1984) irreducible foreignness: "En fait, on présuppose toujours que celui qui peut lire l'œuvre dans sa langue d'origine est mieux placé por la goûter et la connaître que celui qui doit se contener d'une traduction. Celle-ci serait à l'original ce qu'une photo de femme est à une femme réelle. Mais les deux lecteurs ont affaire à un texte étranger, qui leur reste toujours étranger, traduit ou non. Cette étrangeté est irréductible… La différence entre les deux lecteurs n'est que de degré" (p. 249).

[3] It is worth noting that these individuals work in scripted environments not only because the interactions are structured by the codes of behavior, but also because they are governed by situational factors. For the most part, these interactions unfold in *cooperative* (Argyle, 1991) settings.

[4] In many cases, intercultural communication theories posit that the process of acculturation (initiation to the new reality) is inevitably accompanied by deculturation (relaying some of the original norms and competencies to a secondary status) (Kim, 2001). The translator's task is gaining without losing – maintaining two equally elaborate descriptions of reality without letting one dominate the other.

[5] The mix of global and local has been described as 'glocalization' (Gabardi, 2000). This neologism describes a process by which global influences are internalized by local communities – they are translated into familiar experiences, domesticated, stripped of their original cultural significance.

[6] In some cities, the general population may have a seemingly equivalent experience of daily multicultural interaction – cities like Washington D.C. or New York are an example. London has been nicknamed Londonistan to reflect the rising proportion of the immigrant population in the city. However, these are generally fleeting service encounters – eating in an Ethiopian restaurant and having the wait staff assist with your order in English is a very different experience from serving as a UN interpreter on site in Ethiopia helping with famine relief efforts.

[7] Cited in Berman (1984), p. 66. An English translation: "I walk through foreign gardens to pick flowers for my language, as the betrothed of my manner of thinking: I observe foreign manners in order to sacrifice mine to the genius of my fatherland, like fruits ripened under a foreign sun (Berman, 1992, p. 38).

[8] Similar ideas can be seen in the work of Foucault. The major difference here is that for Hymes, the focus is on communication and language, while for Foucault it is on power and knowledge that is the resource of the power, but it is clear that this is a case of a different angle on the same matter, not two different phenomena altogether.

Let us examine the three points from Hymes in relation to similar ideas in Foucault. First, he is advocating a similar move from macro to micro level when he says:

… the problems I pose are always concerned with particular and limited questions… If we want to pose problems in a rigorous, exact way that's likely to allow serious investigations, shouldn't we look for these problems precisely in their most singular and concrete forms? (2000, p. 285).

The need for studying concrete problems is connected, in Foucault's view, to the impossibility of studying atemporal structures (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983) since old ways are continuously replaced by new.
Second, Foucault's archaeology, which consists in "treating discourses not as a group of signs, but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972, p.49), is similar to Hymes's focus on norms rather than syntax. It is not surprising that Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983) use the term "speech act" in their discussion of Foucault's archaeology.
Finally, Foucault understands that belonging to a social group consists in the enactment of its norms, or in Burke's terms, in identification. He therefore argues that there are no absolute categories, only socially constructed conventions on what is true and false, acceptable and unacceptable. Members of a given social group are held together by their understanding of truth.
In sum, there are parallels between the work of Hymes and Foucault. There is a difference in a viewpoint, but not the matter studied. What is true of Hymes' "speech communities" is often true of Foucault's "discursive formations".

[9] Scollon and Scollon (1990) apply Hymes' ideas to the study of differences between two speech communities, the English and the Athabaskan speakers in North America. They show how interaction between the two often lead to conflict because both assign different values to the same communicative behavior. To an Athabaskan, talking about oneself is bragging and arrogance; to an English speaker it is a sign of openness. The two groups interpret the same communicative event differently because they deduce different values and assumptions from it. The analysis of these speech acts from two different perspectives reveals a fundamental difference in worldview between the two groups. It also shows that the behavior of either group cannot be meaningfully explained from a universal (etic) perspective – Athabaskan behavior is best understood in Athabaskan terms, and English behavior in English ones.
Carbaugh (1996) takes on a seemingly more benign case – married couples' choices in changing the wife's name after marriage. Through interviews with recently married couples, Carbaugh singled out three types of solutions that newlyweds have developed to name changes. The interesting part of the analysis is the demonstration that these three types correspond to three different worldviews, or codes. These "meanings in use" (p. 92) reveal underlying "motives" (p. 94) related to issues of identity, authority (pp. 103-104) and intimacy (p. 114).

[10] Cited in Störig (1963), p. 63. Lefevere's (1977) English translation: "Just as a man must decide to belong to one country, so must he adhere to one language, or he will float without any bearings above an unpleasant middle ground" (p. 84) Berman's (1984) French translation: "Tout comme l'homme doit se décider à apartenir à Un pays, il doit se décider à apartenir à Une langue ou à Une autre, sous peine de flotter sans repos dans un déplaisant entre-deux".

[11] The cannibalistic approach (Arrojo, 1986; Vieira, 1994) has the roots in the early 20th century Brazilian literary theory. It is based on "devouring" the other – that is, appropriating the external ideas (mainly the ideas of Western colonizers), and modifying and domesticating them in such a way that they become empowering discourse owned by the local people rather than a tool of external oppression. Cannibalism is about leaving

home, capturing the other (or perhaps even capturing the other locally), and devouring their ideas to enrich the homeland. In that sense, it is similar to the hero's journey with its departure from home and a return of the hero accompanied by his transformation. Cannibalism is the heroic journey of the postcolonial world.

[12] For example, in ICC research, appropriateness and effectiveness are the foundation of most modern definitions of ICC. Appropriateness is about being considerate of other people's needs in pursuing your communicative goals; effectiveness is about achieving your own personal goals in the interaction. Some scholars have questioned the centrality of appropriateness and effectiveness to the issue of ICC (Martin, 1993; Carbaugh, 1993; DeTurk, 2001). They believe that such an interpretation of competence is based on the values of the "Western" researchers that may fail to accommodate the perceptions of competence in other cultures. Reaching goals and maintaining individual control is central to such an understanding of ICC (Parks, 1985; Wiemann & Kelly, 1981); but it may not be applicable to countries where maintaining relational harmony prevails over individual achievement (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Stewart & Bennett, 1991). Even if appropriateness and effectiveness are central to ICC, their perceptions may shift from culture to culture(Carbaugh, 1993). In other words, cultural differences make the notions of appropriateness and effectiveness and the notion of competence itself too ambiguous, and raise questions about the possibility of working out a universal definition of these terms.

In contact hypothesis research, there is a similar difficulty of coming up with a universal list – this time of the conditions of contact between ethnic groups necessary for the improvement of intergroup attitudes. The original list of conditions included the following four: 1) social support for the integration between the groups; 2) potential for intimate rather than casual contact in the situation; 3) equal status between the groups involved in contact; and 4) independence and need for cooperation between groups in the situation (Allport, 1954).

The contact hypothesis continued to be the focus of attention of scholars for several decades, dominated by attempts to expand and modify Allport's original list. Perhaps the most important revision was made by Cook (1985), who argued that the situation should also have a potential for disconfirming stereotypes that the groups have of one another. While the contact hypothesis has succeeded in the task of compiling lists of conditions, the findings from the various studies were inconsistent and by the 1980s there were growing doubts about the applicability of the contact hypothesis to intergroup relationships (Ford, 1986; Hewstone and Brown, 1986; Pettigrew, 1986). There was a new wave of research aimed at the reworking of the original hypothesis in the 1990s. It was based on the belief that the original premise of the hypothesis was at least to some degree accurate. In fact, a recent meta-analysis of some 200 studies on the effect of contact in reducing prejudice showed that "overall, face-to-face interaction between members of distinguishable groups is importantly related to reduced prejudice" (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2000, p. 109). However, while many studies have shown that a set particular conditions has improved intergroup attitudes in a certain scenario, there is no conclusive general list of conditions that are universally applicable.

[13] Scholars with unique experiences have conceptualized cultural identity in unique ways. For example, for Homi Bhabha (1994) the flux of changing identity is the essence of

social life, while fixed culture is an artificial derivative of this essence. Bhabha's views move even further from traditional perspectives in attempt to read contemporary society in a new way, "against the grain". Bhabha offers the idea of *hybridization,* the process of cross pollination between different ways of living. For Bhabha, it is a primary process while culture is a secondary process, imposed by the governments and nation states to "still the flux" (Huddart, 2006, p. 7) of hybridization. This notion is a novel proposition, but no less plausible than the traditional view that it attempts to reverse.

[14] Even when a general explanation is non-trivial, it is usually a higher-level, abstract metaphor. It is, as it were, a meta-explanation. General systems theory (Boulding, 1975; von Bertalanffy, 1975) is a fine example of such a higher level narrative. Its latest incarnations, chaos theory (Gleick, 1987; Ruelle, 1991; Thom, 1975) and complexity theory (especially the Santa Fe flavor of complexity, Casti, 1994; Holland 1995; Kauffman, 1994; Langston, 1984; following Nicholis & Prigogine, 1977; Prigogine & Stengers, 1984), are a particularly rich source of metaphors for translation studies (Boulanger, 2006; Kiraly, 2006) and social sciences in general (Agar, 2004; Axelrod & Cohen, 1999; Marion, 1999; Salem, Barclay, & Hoffman, 2002; Waldrop, 1992; Wilkinson, 2003).

Energy, communication, memory, and adaptation are all part of the complexity speak. Many of these terms are also present in theories of cultural identity, labeled as such or masquerading under different names. Complexity is the study of nonlinear systems, that differ fundamentally from linear systems studied by traditional science (Campbell, 1989); language use and translation certainly qualify as non-linear phenomena (Boulanger, 2006).

More precisely, complexity can also be a source of metaphors to describe cultural identity. Cultures can be seen as strange attractors in a global landscape, separated by bifurcation walls. Each culture is a survival strategy and as such represents a fitness peak in the landscape. Leaving one attraction basin and traveling to another requires leaving the comfort of a fitness peak and coping with less comfortable areas of the landscape until another peak (= another culture) is reached (=cross-cultural adaptation). Since leaving the attractor space requires an immense amount of energy, there is always the added risk of not reaching a new peak (=Borderlands) or not being able to return (=exile). There is also a possibility of reconstructing the attractors into a bigger more inclusive one (=multiculturalism); but if crossing bifurcation walls is a feat, destroying them is probably close to impossible for an individual (see Kauffman, 1995; Marion, 1999, for an in-depth discussion of complexity terminology used above).

Complexity theory demonstrates that generalist explanations (like complexity theory itself) are often of a black box kind – we can predict the big outcome in the long run, but usually not explain the minute details of how it was achieved (Kauffman, 1995; Casti, 1994). It is great as a meta-narrative and a source of metaphorical inspiration, but it is not fit for explaining individual level events – at least not in a way that would illuminate the inner workings of cultural identity.

[15] In Meschonnic (1999), p. 24.

[16] Translation theory, by definition, is a multilingual phenomenon. Contemporary endeavors are influenced greatly by a variety of previous schools of thought in linguistics and literary theory, and to figures like the German Romantic philosophers (Snell-Honrby,

2006); Russian formalists and Czech structuralists (Ben-Ari, 2006). Since a formal discipline of translation studies did not exist until the middle of the 20th century, theoretical insights about translation have to be gleaned from sources in various disciplines, languages, and epochs. Lefevere's (1992) collection of statements about translation from the Roman times to the 1920s is a fine example of an attempt to herd these ideas into one central place and make them accessible to a wider readership.

But the absence of a discipline was not only a curse but a blessing as well. It was an advantage because it liberated the scholars working on translation from disciplinary doctrines and in-house power struggles (Ben-Ari, 2006). In her review of the development of translation theory, Snell-Hornby (2006) uses Radnitzky's (1968/1970) four stage model of paradigm emergence. First come the precursors; they are followed by the pioneers, then by the masters; last come the disciples. Snell-Hornby (2006) does not state explicitly at what stage she believes translation studies to be right now, but her extensive discussion of the first two stages seems to suggest that it should be in the third or the fourth stage.

Radnitzky's stages are reminiscent to Kuhn's (1960/1996) influential ideas about paradigm shifts. These changes assume similar rebellious and iconoclastic trends during the early stages of a paradigm, and a regimented stagnation at later stages, when research is reduced to 'mop-up operations'.

There are many signs in the discipline of translation studies that it may be in the masters or the disciples stage, and at least partially engaged in mop-up operations and "academic empire building" (Venuti, 1998, p. 28). The discipline has matured and created its own journals (such as *The translator, Babel, Meta,* and *Target*), professional associations (for example, the European Society for Translation Studies), centers of research (Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium, University of Manchester in Britain, Binghampton University in the U.S., and many others), and postgraduate training programs (such as CETRA). There are numerous attempts to provide the grand narrative for the discipline, in a form of encyclopedias (Baker, 1998), anthologies (Pöchhaker & Shlesinger, 2002), textbooks (Bassnett, 1980/2002; Gentzler, 2001), and accounts of historical development (Snell-Hornby, 2006). The discipline's core has solidified enough so that now it is acceptable to talk about splits in its monolithic substance (see Ben-Ari, 2006) or about "challenging the traditional axioms" (as the title of a recent book by Nike Pokorn (2006) suggests).

The disadvantage of this maturation is that some theories, or theorists, or even whole schools of thought may be left out of the canon. The reasons for ostracism range from inaccessibility of sources (usually because they are unavailable in English) to not fitting established divisions and traditions within the discipline (Ben-Ari, 2006). Also, the very existence of a canon paves the way for a Foucauldian stranglehold of the norm and the banishment of the 'abnormal', restricting the range of methodologies and acceptable topics for research (Deleuze, 1986).

[17] English translation: "Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him" (Berman, 1992, p. 146).

[18] The two models are reminiscent of open and closed systems in general systems theory (Boulding, 1975; von Bertalanffy). In a closed system, there are no external inputs or

outputs, no exchange with the environment; thus the system is predictable. An open system evolves dynamically since it interacts with its larger environment. Closed systems exist only as mathematical models, as approximations of real life. They serve as a learning tool during the early stages of understanding a phenomenon. It is not surprising, then, that early translation theory relied on such mechanistic explanations that required little understanding of more global phenomena surrounding text transfer.

[19] This is echoed by Mason (1994), who claims that translator interventions occur with or without translator's intention.

[20] "The prevalent approaches can be divided – loosely but without too much conceptual violence – into a linguistics-based orientation, aiming to construct an empirical science, and an aesthetics-based orientation that emphasizes the cultural and political values informing translation practice and research" (Venuti, 1998, p. 8)

[21] It is commonly claimed that reviewing textual first and moving to the contextual next allows one to move in chronological order, since textual approaches generally precede contextual ones (Snell-Hornby, 2006). An alternative view of the textual / contextual division is offered by Gideon Toury, who argues that from the very inception of modern translation studies, culture and context were central to the understanding of translation, and that the phrase "cultural turn" is a misnomer; and since the cultural focus was there all along, purely textual view follows rather than precedes the contextual views (Ben-Ari, 2006).

[22] There has been a revival of the text transfer idea in recent years with the development of the localization industry (Esselink, 2003; Pym, 2004, 2005). When dealing with a limited vocabulary and syntax of software interfaces, a textual approach can generally bring satisfactory results. As computers become more powerful, the textual approach seems more and more attractive to some scholars and practitioners, reviving old dogmas that linguists were hoping to put to rest many years back. For example, Esselink (2003) describes an utopian database-driven approach to machine translation, where each element in language A corresponds to an element in language B. While the growth in computing power may indeed bring about better machine translations, it will hardly be thanks to linear interfaces and one-to-one correspondences envisioned by Esselink.

[23] Lederer (1978) elaborates this claim by saying that the content of conference translation is depoliticized, and while research on it can provide useful insights, its focus remains very applied. This view is shared by researchers who actually study conference translation. Setton (2000) lists three goals of conference interpretation research. It has a pedagogical function in that it helps to develop strategies for teaching translation. It also allows to establish criteria for the assessment of translation quality which can be used in making employment and promotion choices among translators. Finally, conference interpretation research is a laboratory for the study of human cognition, with the ultimate goal of understanding the mental processes that enable translation. All the three goals have a very clear utilitarian emphasis.

[24] The application of the notion of an intervention, just like the notion of visibility, can be extended beyond translation practice. Interventions occur in interactions involving other professional intercultural communicators. An international student advisor may intervene to warn the student of an impeding immigration violation. A tour guide may intervene to prevent a sightseer's *faux pas*, or simply to persuade the client of the guide's superior

abilities in an attempt to maximize the financial rewards. All these cases share a common thread – an intervention is a transgression of prescribed norms of professional behavior.

[25] Interventions may even be entirely fictitious, pre-manufactured and manipulative – as are the cases discussed by Toury (2005). He cites the examples of a 'translation' of the *Book of Mormon* as the foundational document for the creation of a whole church and the fabulous 'Kazakh poet' Dzhambul Dzhabayev (1846-1945) as a vehicle of Soviet propaganda.

[26] It also shows that they believe in the possibility of a perfectly accurate expression and interpretation of ideas. Kopczynski (1994) found that respondents preferred interpreters to translate for content when others were speaking, but wanted them to perform a ghost role and translate word-for-word when the respondents themselves were talking. These findings reveal rather naïve beliefs that consumers of translation have about it. It also shows their selfish conviction that others need to be interpreted, but their own ideas are accurately expressed and do not require any interpretation.

[27] Translators have been struggling with the negative views of their practice and the lack of adequate attention to it; but they haven't been particularly successful with the struggle in predominantly monocultural and monolingual societies like the United States. In the U.S., translations are a negligible proportion of the fiction books, in stark contrast to most others. For example, in late 1980s, only 3.5% of fiction books published in the U.S. were translations; in Italy the figure for the same period was 26% (Venuti, 1992). In 1995, out of the approximately 65,000 books published in the U.S., 2.65% were translations; the total number of translations from Arabic was 17 volumes (Venuti, 1998). The relegation of translations to a secondary status in relation to the "original work" puts practitioners in this profession below writers in respect to status, pay and even legal rights. The inferiority of translation to the original is codified in the American copyright law, which states that a translation cannot hold a separate copyright and can only be copyrighted along with the work translated (Venuti, 1992, p. 6). This robs translators of any tangible means to control the results of their work and reap substantial material benefits from it.

[28] For the most part of human evolution translation has been considered a trade rather than a rigorous activity worthy of a scientific investigation. Early descriptions of translation practice reveal ambivalent feelings about translation – some accounts praise interpreters, while others treat them with suspicion and disdain. In ancient Egyptian texts interpreters are described as "speakers of strange tongues" (Hermann, 1956). In contrast, Roman texts reveal a more positive attitude towards translators. This is manifested in the composition of the Latin word, "inter-partes" – human mediator positioned between two parties (Hermann, 1956). Finally, Isidore of Seville describes interpreters with reverence and awe. In his opinion the case of a linguistic interpreter comes "next only to that of the interpreter between God and man" (Hermann, 1956/2002, p. 18). Isidore's position reveals a fascination with the interpreter's amazing ability to serve as a medium simply by working with symbols. Throughout the history of humankind, translation has been treated with the same mixture of disdain and admiration. Their ability to go both ways and feel at home in multiple worlds triggers contradicting reactions in the observers.

[29] In Foucault, 2000, p. 288.

[30] Not surprisingly, then, my interviews with females are on average 500 words longer than my interviews with males.

[31] I generally attempted to accommodate the schedule of the participants. If they wanted to do an interview at five in the morning my time, I would still agree to do it knowing that they may not be available at a time that would be more convenient for me. These before-sunrise interviews were usually challenging for me physically and I felt that I couldn't fully follow the discussion while fighting sleepiness and fatigue. Other times, when the time was perfectly comfortable for me, it was very late at night for the respondent, who had trouble concentrating after a long work day. Most interviews, however, were conducted at a time of the day agreeable to both sides.

[32] Producing transcripts enabled new ways of analyzing interview data, but that doesn't mean that transcription doesn't have its shortcomings. There is an inevitable data loss in going from an audio recording with its range of vocal and emotional cues to a text largely stripped of these important markers. Such a loss is inevitable unless conversation analysis (CA) style transcribing is used. I tried to counter the loss by listening to the interview recordings again after working with interview transcripts for a while.

[33] Another way to appreciate the size of the text is to imagine printing the output in one line with Times New Roman 12 point font – the line would be 3 miles long.

[34] Another way to describe talk share is to look at turn lengths. Overall, the average duration of talk until the other person speaks is 28 seconds, or 55 words per turn. My average turn in 36 words; the respondents' average is 72 words per turn. The number of turns stays approximately the same throughout the data collection process, with an average of 90 turns per interview (predictably, the turns are divided equally between me and them – given that my speech is always followed by their speech, this is hardly a meaningful finding).

[35] “It is easy to make rabbits multiply on paper” (Pagnol, 1962).

[36] Besides facing arrogance and inexperience, interpreters also had growing pressure from clients who had at least a rudimentary knowledge of English and complicated the work by interfering in the translation process. Pressure also came from inexperienced wannabe interpreters who destroyed the industry by agreeing to work for ridiculously low payment. The ability to bid on interpreting contracts online made the field so low margin that some respondents would advise young people trying to decide on a career to stay away from interpreting. One respondent described interpreting as a "profession which shouldn't exist" (14) because ideally people should be at least bilingual, not requiring any linguistic mediation.

[37] It is worth noting, though, that the painfulness of working with challenging clients is in no way unique to the work of English interpreters; but the additional difficulties stemming from the status of English as an international lingua franca are.

[38] One interpreter (4) who had experience with Oriental languages (in her case, Tibetan), noted that the view of the interpreter as a passive conduit reveals a relatively low weight assigned to this role in the West. In contrast, in the East the interpreter is seen as a much more central figure in the communicative process and is therefore treated with more respect.

[39] Finally, one interpreter noted that he reserved the right to omit or abbreviate the parts of the conversation that weren't directly related to work – for example, if negotiations were preceded by a discussion of a recent football game, some of the details could be cut. He also refused to translate the same question multiple times when people would hope to

get an answer to a question that remained unanswered and attempted to paraphrase it. According to professional norms, such behavior was deemed unacceptable – that is why at the time of the interview he was seriously considering finding a different occupation in life (21).

[40] Beyond the two major reasons that will be discussed here, there was one unique case: one interpreter said that she would only with people she "personally likes" and who "would listen and care" – explaining cultural things to everyone was a waste of time because quite a few people didn't care to be told (13).

[41] Flow is a "difficult activity that stretches the persons capacity and involves an element of novelty and discovery" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p. 110). Unlike many other human activities, flow is not dependent on extrinsic rewards. It is enjoyable because of the intrinsic rewards that it can give. "Flow is a state with universal qualities that is experienced by people in a wide range of contexts. Elderly German gardeners describe their feelings of intense involvement they experience when tending their roses with similar words as Japanese teenagers use to describe how it feels to race their motorcycles. Navajo shepherds following their flocks on horseback also mention similar experiences, which sound much like those reported by Hindu mystics - or by dedicated athletes all over the world" (Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999, p. 6). Other examples of flow described by Csikszentmihalyi are rock climbing, chess, creative work, and the work of surgeons. They all share nine common qualities:

1) There are clear goals every step of the way
2) There is immediate feedback to one's actions
3) There is a balance between challenges and skills
4) Action and awareness are merged
5) Distractions are excluded from consciousness
6) There is no worry of failure
7) Self-consciousness disappears
8) The sense of time becomes distorted
9) The activity becomes autotelic (i.e. is an end in itself)

(adapted from Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, pp. 110-113).

[42] One way to deal with the load was to be better prepared than the rest of the participants – "the interpreter… always has to be smarter than the person he or she is translating" (30).

[43] No matter how resourceful you were, you still had to be prepared that you will occasionally end up in situations that would make you look awkward and foolish (2).

[44] Interpreters had to recur to joke substitutions more and more as their clients got progressively more drunk and started saying "very strange things" (29) that could not be translated word for word.

[45] In *Life is beautiful* ("La vita é bella"), a 1997 Italian tragicomic film about the Second World War, a prisoner manages to protect his little son from the horrors and despondency of a concentration camp by aptly hiding all sinister evidence and reframing all the cues as a game so that the son never loses a positive outlook throughout their lengthy confinement.

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Appendix A
The interview schedule

Demographic questions
If you don't mind me asking, how old are you?
How long have you worked as translator and an interpreter?
What is your academic background for the job?
What proportion of your time do you spend interpreting orally vs. doing written translation?

Core questions

Cultural identity: Linguistic elements
Did you grow up monolingual or bilingual? What do you consider your native language(s)?
What languages do you work with?
How much experience have you had with them?
How would you estimate your fluency in them compared to your native language(s)?
If you were to travel to [insert country where the working non-native language(s) is spoken], would you feel at home? Do you know enough about the society to get around?

* Most of the linguistic fluency estimation can be done from the interview itself – from the way the person talks

Cultural identity: Cultural elements
Do you consider yourself [insert citizenship] or [insert working non-native language(s)]?
How does knowing several languages change you compared to the people you work for who know don't know as much?
When I came to the U.S. as a student I found out that their was a different cultural norm about honesty. Russian students help each other even during a test if they can; it is not cool not to do it. American students think that is cheating. So it was hard for me to reconcile those things in my head. Do you ever run into anything like that in your work as an interpreter?
How does that affect your work?

Personal involvement
Please answer the following questions keeping in mind your work as a community interpreter, not as a translator
What does an interpreter do? What is the role of an interpreter?
When I worked as an interpreter in Russia, I escorted an American delegation to a high school. The Americans were amazed to see how poor it was and decided to gather some money. The Russians were offended seeing them gathering money; they thought the gift should have been prepared beforehand or not given at all. I had to intervene and stop the money gathering to avoid a scandal. In your experience, did you ever have to intervene like that? How often does that happen? How did it affect the situation? Do you ever have to intervene verbally to help the flow of the conversation?
Whose side should you take?
What are the cases when you *would* intervene?

Open questions

If you could tell one story that symbolized your experiences as a translator / interpreter, what would it be?
If you could give beginning translators / interpreters three pieces of advice about your work, what would they be?

Close
Is there anything else that you would like to add?
Do you have any comments about the interview process?